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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Progress of Maghreb Union Slowed by Conflict

92AF0056A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
6 Oct 91 p 3

[Article by Muhammad 'Ali al-Qulaybi: "Maghreb Union at Critical Stage; Quadripartite Relations in New Crisis; Active Efforts Underway To Implement Casablanca Resolutions"]

[Text] Before the ink is dry on the resolutions adopted by the Maghreb countries' summit conference held in Casablanca in mid-September 1991, it is clear that the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA] now stands at a crossroads that could define the level of cohesiveness binding its members together.

Political observers note that, with the exception of Mauritania, relations among the four other Maghreb nations are at a stage that could be termed somewhat critical.

There is no doubt that developments in the course of Tunisian-Algerian relations right now are more than grabbing attention. Despite the assurances of Tunisian and Algerian officials that relations between the two countries are strong, it is patently clear to many observers that these relations are currently at a critical stage, even though they have not yet reached the danger level.

The basic cause of that is the activities being carried out by certain leaders and elements of the fundamentalist Ennadah Movement against Tunisia, staging out of Algerian territory. This is what prompted Tunisian Minister of Interior Abdallah Kallel to say that Algeria constituted a "base" for sabotage operations being carried out by the Ennadah Movement against Tunisia. Later, Minister Kallel went to Algiers again carrying a message from President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to President Chadli Bendjedid. It was noted that its content stressed the need for cooperation between the two nations to counter the fundamentalist trend that threatens both of them.

At the same time, Tunisian Prime Minister Dr. Hamed Karoui pointed out during a mass rally that the existence of a pact between Tunisia and Algeria reinforced the obligation of each country to deny the use of its territory for any hostile activity against the other country. Political observers interpret this reference as a frank call to Algerian authorities to commit to the articles of this pact and to settle the matter of the Ennadah Movement's use of Algerian territory to smuggle arms into Tunisia and to train their elements to carry out activities injurious to Tunisia's security.

Political observers are of the opinion that the future of Algerian-Tunisian relations depends on the extent of the Algerian authorities' compliance with the Tunisian Government's request to end the Ennadah Movement's activities within Algerian territory. With regard to

another aspect of the Maghreb picture, observers note that Algerian-Moroccan relations are not what they were, despite the relative improvement that occurred suddenly a short time ago. Observers attribute the reason for that to the Western Saharan issue, which has surfaced again with the approaching date of the UN-brokered referendum to settle the Sahara conflict, which has gone on for many years.

There is information that the Moroccan Government has sent tens of thousands of citizens residing within the Kingdom of Morocco to the Sahara area. The Moroccan Government has justified this measure by saying that those persons were originally Saharan residents who were forced to leave during the war in that area and who are now returning to their homes following the stabilization of security and peace in that area. However, the Algerian Government—which has always supported the Polisario Movement—has received this step with displeasure, and considers the object of this move as an attempt to tip the balance in Morocco's favor in the coming referendum, so that the majority of votes cast will be in favor of annexing the Sahara to the Kingdom of Morocco.

Some circles quote Algerian officials as saying that the Moroccan Government would not have embarked on this step if it had not been convinced that the result of the referendum—if left without any intervention—would be in favor of Saharan independence.

Observers think that in the event a solution satisfactory to both sides is not reached, Moroccan-Algerian relations could once more return to a critical stage, with all that this entails in terms of the dangers of a resumption of military conflict in the Sahara.

There is another side to this picture, represented by the words of some observers that Libya "has one foot on the farm and the other in the wasteland," as regards its Maghreb and eastern relations. Perhaps the best evidence of that is the refusal of the Libyan leader, Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi, to participate in the recent Casablanca summit, despite the fact that King Hassan II visited him two weeks before in Libya to take part in ceremonies dedicating the second stage of the great man-made river. This means that active Libyan participation in support of the UMA cannot—in the view of some observers—be relied upon to any great extent.

In light of this picture, which upsets many observers, attention is now being directed toward learning the impact of the intense political efforts currently being made on more than one level, on the continuation of the present conflict and on rescuing Maghreb relations from greater and more dangerous deterioration. If these efforts succeed, one could expect Maghreb relations to be stimulated and some of the recent Casablanca summit resolutions implemented. However, the reverse could mean a stumbling block in the path of Maghreb cooperation. If it reaches this result, observers fear that matters will reflect on the cohesiveness of the Maghreb position

vis-a-vis the European Community, which is primarily bound by excellent relations with the Arab Maghreb states. Moreover, a question mark hangs over the fate of the so-called 5-plus-4 summit, which will bring together the leaders of the Arab Maghreb states and the leaders of the European countries bordering the western rim of the Mediterranean basin—France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. That summit is scheduled to be held in Tunis early next year.

Egypt Sets Currency Limits on Workers in Libya

92P40043C *Cairo AL-SIYASI in Arabic 13 Oct 91 p 1*

[Text] An agreement has been reached between the Ministry of Labor and the Secretariat of the People's General Committee for Vocational Organization and Training in Libya concerning the utilization of an Egyptian workforce in government agencies in Libya.

The Egyptian Ministry of Labor will meet the Libyan needs for workers according to the specifications and characteristics of the labor market.

The new system will provide a possibility for the worker to convert 50 percent of his salary into hard currency, whereas workers coming in without ties to the Labor Ministry and those who made their contracts in Libya will only be able to convert 300 dinars annually. With regard to the local contract, the contractor has the right to convert the equivalent of 200 dinars annually; doctors, teachers, and trainers have the right to convert 50 percent of their salaries.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

Details of 'Arafat's Meeting With Al-Asad in Latakia

TA0811104691 *Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 8 Nov 91 p 3*

[Article by Ori Nir]

[Text] Despite the care-free atmosphere projected by PLO head Yasir 'Arafat who is visiting Syria, it has become known that during an extended conversation he held with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad at his palace in the coastal city of Latakia, a number of disputes erupted.

Al-Asad was angered by the fact that the Palestinian delegation rushed to meet with the Israelis, within the framework of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, without waiting for the Syrian delegation. "You damaged the Arab bargaining capability," al-Asad said to a delegation of the PLO Executive Council which, in addition to 'Arafat, included Yasir 'Amr, 'Abdallah Hurani, and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbu. Farouq Qaddumi joined them later.

Al-Asad even demanded that, in the future, the Palestinians coordinate their contacts with Israel, and particularly their positions. He explained that this split between

the Syrians and the Lebanese, on the one hand, and the Jordanians and the Palestinians, on the other, "would only serve Israel."

Yesterday, the official Syrian daily AL-THAWRAH reported on the possible continuation of the first phase of the peace conference in Madrid and estimated that the process to come was "still in danger." It noted that "the path of the peace process is exposed to barriers and mines, since the test of intentions during the first phase in Madrid gave many hints as to the approach of the Arabs who want peace—and that of Israel who, alone, proclaimed its obstinate position and refusal to implement international resolutions."

EGYPT

Labor Leaders on Expected Union Changes

92AF0029A *Cairo ROSE AL-YUSIF in Arabic 19 Sep pp 14-16*

[Article by Amin Taha Mursi: "Revamped Labor Unions"]

[Text] Our society is currently undergoing far-reaching fundamental economic changes as it seeks to boost the private sector while shedding central controls and slimming down the public sector.

Such expansive changes must necessarily impact several existing structures and organizations. Naturally, the labor union structure will be extensively influenced.

The concept of organized labor will change. The objectives of union activity will also change, and union strategies and tactics will also catch the wind of change.

We begin with Mustafa Munji, Federation of Labor Unions secretary for economic affairs and president of the General Union of Military Industries Workers. He said: "We are in a state of transition from a controlled economic system to a free economy mandated by world developments."

This transformation was initiated by the Business Sector Law, which imposed a heavy burden upon us, as a labor movement, by vesting company managements with greater authority to define their goals and commit workers to them in the expectation of enhancing economic unity and consequently improving salaries and worker standards.

A History of Relevance

'Abd-al-Rahman Khayr, assistant secretary of the Military Industries Workers Union said: "The present framework of the union movement in Egypt has been without relevance since 1975. That was reaffirmed in 1976, when it supported the concept of party plurality and disassembled the framework for the workforce alliance."

He added: "The good intentions of union leaders have completely clouded their understanding of social, economic, and tourist conditions in Egypt. They persist, with every good intention, in using the language of the 1960s. It was no surprise, therefore, that in a climate where economic forces combined to serve their private interests, union membership encompassed less than one-quarter of the actual work force.

"Those who were fit to lead the union movement under a controlled economy will not be competent to do so in a private-sector-based free economy, where managements of economic units and institutions enjoy the highest decree of discretion.

"This point has been proven recently when those [union] leaders refrained from debating the Business Sector Law, thereby imposing on all of us the burden of calling for union liberalization and plurality and for allowing the working class to be represented by its own political party. Unionism is a coin with two inseparable faces—economic and political."

Surprise!

Ahmad Ya'qub, President of the General Union of Commerce Workers, said: "We were taken aback by the Business Sector Law, with whose provisions the union movement is unable to deal. In short, the movement lacks staffers capable of dealing with the new reality, which calls for those proficiency in collective bargaining.

"Each negotiating party will necessarily resort to its own devices. The management mentality, on one hand, will use the weapon of full or partial lockout, thereby turning working hands into unemployed workers. It will utilize its prerogative to suspend periodic raises on the pretext of diminished productivity or falling short of targets!

The other party will likewise be entitled to utilize its own weapons should collective bargaining fail. This would mean a return to strikes—a frequent practice before the July revolution. Striking is a right acknowledged by the Egyptian judiciary after examining the text of international agreements ratified by Egypt, specifically, the agreement on union freedoms!"

Return to Basics

Ja'far 'Abd-al-Mun'im, secretary general of the Chemical Workers Union, pointed out that during the upcoming stage of economic change, union fundamentals will produce skillful labor leaders and bureaucratic unionists. The period will require new kinds of unionists, especially those who are firm believers in volunteerism, either in the service of unionism or of Egyptian workers. There will be no place for unionists who hide behind antiquated laws and concepts.

"True unionism prevailed when it was not protected by legislation. Current laws did not just happen. They are the result of hard work and continuous struggle by a group of union leaders who labored without legislative

protection and who risked dismissal, dislocation, etc. Unionism in the coming period must be protected against itself by letting the rank-and-file elect responsible leaders who will safeguard past gains achieved through the sweat and efforts of honorable unionists. The future calls for unionists who are not gentrified.

"We must, first and foremost, ask ourselves how unionists can function in the absence of organizational or other ties among the various entities of the unionist movement. Such ties now exist on paper only. Union dues are mandatory and are deducted at the source, then sent by check to the head offices of general unions.

"Our country will soon be experiencing a unionist movement of a different color, driven by young leaders and innovative concepts."

Resources and Funds

Ahmad 'Abd-al-Dhahir, president of the Administrative Services Workers Union, considers the Business Sector Law not as a starting point for change, but as part and parcel of it. He said: "It began in 1974 with the economic open-door policy, followed by party plurality. The unionist movement should have sensed the change and dealt with it by fully utilizing the financial resources available to it from state agencies."

He added: "Such economic resources, far from being unique, are common in most countries of the world.

"Modest worker funds build gigantic economic enterprises. The Egyptian unionist movement had ample opportunity to undertake cooperative productive ventures. There is a lot to prove that. The state has made vast tracts of land available to labor unions in the capital and on the coasts, including real estate for a worker resort on the northern coast. For that purpose, 25 million Egyptian pounds were allotted to the Federation of Labor Unions' general account.

"The resources, to put it simply, are plentiful and available. The movement, had it been alert early on, would have used them in funding ventures that would have absorbed unemployment, boosted productive capacity, and stifled parasitic activity."

Ahmad 'Abd-al-Dhahir reiterated: "There are union funds in banks, credit unions, insurance, worker funds for housing and social services, Labor Bank funds, and foreign aid and grants.

"We must espouse productive ventures that would serve society, such as exportable products that would capitalize on ties with unionist movements in many parts of the world in order to facilitate the export of such world-renowned Egyptian products as leather goods, furniture, non-traditional clothes, etc.

"In short, unionist movements are rendered impotent without economic power. It makes no sense for a professional union to be showered with foreign loans and

grants, then spend the funds on crafts and small industries. That should have been accomplished through the unionist movement as represented by the Federation of Labor Unions."

Help Wanted

Sulayman Idris, vice-president of the Union of Engineering Industries Workers, believes it is imperative to cultivate union executives capable of mastering collective bargaining skills, especially since management will be better-equipped and more experienced in that respect. It is also imperative for general unions and for the Federation of Labor Unions to establish specialized departments with highly-competent consultants in order to do the studies needed by labor negotiators. Such experts should be high-achievers as well as labor-connected and oriented.

The Crime of Unionists

Sulayman Idris supports the view of al-Sayyid Rashid, vice-president of the General Federation of Labor Unions and president of the General Union of Workers. He said: "We are all mandated by current developments to cultivate union staffs armed with knowledge, information, and thorough familiarity with all labor and company laws.

"We must abandon the notion that union activity requires nothing more than being street-smart. This is a crime. Unionism all over the world has become a science whose power is to be feared by other business parties."

Productivity and Wages

Khayri Hazim, secretary general of the General Federation of Labor Unions, said: "Everyone should be aware that the movement will be operating under different circumstances. It confronts the important issue of how to operate in a public-spirited manner while balancing national interests against the interests of the working class."

He disagrees with others and believes that the changes that have occurred have not infringed in the least on any constitutional labor gains. "That is why I see no reason for trepidation or for the call to reexamine new laws, and especially those that are being implemented.

"I wonder how bonuses can be given to workers of units incapable of producing and, consequently, why they fear a freeze on wages. I am for linking wages to productivity."

He added: "We must now reach agreements with management on arbitration systems to be used by either party to resolve collective bargaining differences. Such guarantees are mandatory for mutual trust and for social peace.

The Role of Union Committees

'Ali Madkur, member of the union committee of the workers of Egyptian Spinning and Weaving in al-Mahallah, holds a different opinion. He believes that future union activity will have no consequence under the new law, which named general unions, and not union committees, to work with management on drafting employment regulations. "As a result, the role of committees has been rendered marginal unless the reverse occurs and the Labor Union Law is amended.

"As for union staffs, it is unfortunate that the vast majority of them have transformed union activity into services not much different from those rendered by benevolent associations."

Fayiz [al-Kartah], vice-president of the General Union of Engineering and Metallurgical Industries Workers, said that it has become necessary to reorganize union movement ranks in line with the mechanics of capitalist relations, especially since the movement has operated for a long time under legislative protection from management and employer excesses. "The unionist movement, in its present state, is hardly prepared for the new environment.

"It makes no sense to arm the forces of proprietorship, which control the means of production, with laws that enable them to prevail when the workers are deprived of all means to legitimately extricate their rights.

"Students of the unionist movement's reaction to the Business Sector Law prior to its passage recognize the extent of the movement's passivity in exercising its legal and constitutional rights to debate the bill. The bill was consequently passed in its present form, without input from the unionist movement, even though legislators have emphasized the importance of its debating all bills governing work and workers."

ISRAEL

Jews in Soviet Union Organizing Politically, Socially

92AE0027A Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
1 Oct 91 p 1B

[Article by Lili Galili]

[Text] Many of those returning from a recent visit to the Soviet Union have made observations comparing what is happening in Jewish affairs in Russia to the processes that characterized the Jewish community's early organizing in the United States. Even if the analogy between the two situations is imperfect, large groups of Soviet Jews apparently are in different stages of developing themselves into a deeply rooted diaspora whose activities are inspired not by longing for return to Zion but by a desire to continue life where they are. Soviet Jews no longer face the choice between immigration to Israel and disappearance through assimilation. They can now chose

to perpetuate an active Jewish life in the homeland they have no intention of abandoning.

Throughout its existence, Israel has been accustomed to treating the Jews of the Soviet Union from only two perspectives. For many years, it was a silent community around which Israel and the world fought a battle whose slogan was "Let my people go." With the opening of Soviet gates to Jewish emigration, Israeli efforts have focused on the scope of immigration and feverish pursuit of the oscillations in the numbers of immigrants and the reasons for those variations. Accordingly, the Israeli establishment has not turned its attention to considering anew the possibility that even if immigration continues, the Soviet Union will still be home to a sizable group of Jews that is carving out a niche for itself.

It now seems that the conventional view of the world, which sees the Jewish future built on two great centers, Israel and the United States, must include as well a third center composed of the Jews of the Soviet Union.

One of the most prominent features of this development is the process of "coming out of the closet" for the Russian Jewish intelligentsia, which is forming its own identity that will contribute to the creation of a new and different Soviet Union. This group of intellectuals, clustered primarily in Moscow and Leningrad, is excited by the liberalization their country is undergoing and sees its future as an inseparable part of that process.

At the same time, countless Jewish organizations are springing up. The proliferation of these groups and camps brings to mind the early stages of the American Jewish community.

The appearance of organizations based on religion and ethnicity in the Soviet Union, however, is not peculiar today to the Jews. The collapse of the totalitarian regime, which was marked by a total absence of social and voluntary organizations, has left a society lacking all civic associations. Into this vacuum, which is being filled by the tides of nationalism inundating the Soviet Union, organizing on the basis of an existing religious foundation is easy and opportune.

In Moscow alone, there are 95 different Jewish organizations engaged in small-scale struggles for power and influence both inside and outside the Jewish community. In just the past several weeks, the 30 Jewish schools in the Soviet Union were augmented by two more Jewish elementary schools. The first seminar was held last month on Jewish leadership. The well-to-do among Soviet Jews have been signed up to support and obtain money for those Jewish groups they wish to honor. During his last visit to the Soviet Union, Dr. Ron Kronish, representing the American Jewish Committee in Israel, encountered an even more far-reaching phenomenon. In a meeting with a wealthy Jew—and those do exist—the idea came up to establish a Soviet branch of the Jewish National Fund to elicit contributions for Israel. Even if we proceed on the well-founded assumption that nothing will come of that idea, it reveals the

differences arising in the relationship between the diaspora in the Soviet Union and Israel.

One important aspect of the new Jewish organizations is the extent of their influence on internal politics in the Soviet Union. It is an open secret that the umbrella organization, the "Va'ad" [council], played an active part, on Boris Yeltsin's side, in the aborted coup. Its leaders not only came out publicly in his favor but even actively offered him aid through the use of its communications network to link Yeltsin with his supporters in different places.

Even if Soviet authorities still do not officially recognize the Jewish leadership, they do not scoff at its power. This attitude has been formed primarily with an eye towards the wealth of world Jewry on which the Soviet Union is now so dependent. Hopes for investment of Jewish capital in the Soviet Union also are fueling the courtship of the top levels of the Jewish Agency, which officials regard as the government of the Jewish people. The Jews of the Soviet Union are assuming the role of an important intermediary between Soviet authorities and Jewish money, a situation likely to afford them in time the status of a pressure group.

These developments within the Jewish community depend, of course, on social-political developments in the Soviet Union. An interruption in the process of liberalization, or an outbreak of anti-Semitism, would nip this progress in the bud. Stabilization of the situation and renewal of diplomatic relations with Israel, on the other hand, probably would strengthen the new tendencies towards crystallization of the Jewish community and grant it legitimacy.

The Jewish Agency's official policy provides that all its official actions within the Jewish community in the Soviet Union are directed solely towards immigration and clearly against anything that could help further a Jewish presence in the Soviet Union. In light of the changes occurring, the Agency and Israel must reassess their position towards the diaspora in the Soviet Union which, nonetheless, will continue to exist.

Discussion of Performance of Young Likud Ministers

*92AE0027B Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
4 Oct 91 p 1B*

[Article by Dan Margolit]

[Text] It is fashionable to love the young guard of the Likud. They are polished and groomed, flashy and witty, their faces turned towards the 21st century. The Labor Party worships them with a dash of masochism: what is Uzi Bar'am compared to Dan Meridor, or Hayim Ramon and Yosi Beilen compared to Roni Milo and Ehud Olmert? One must also grant the Likud an embarrassment of riches in the personalities of Beni Begin and Moshe Katzav and David Magen and Benyamin Netanyahu and Tzahi Hanegbi. But this deep and generous line

of credit is no bonus. It has a fixed and certain date of payment looming in the crisis in Israel's relations with the United States.

The due date on payments is not the same for all the young men at the top. They are not a homogenous group but rather divide up, in Likud terms, between doves and hawks. When Hanegbi and Uzi Landau get worried, Meridor and Olmert stretch out in their offices; when Begin the younger sets forth his opinion to Yitzhaq Shamir, Milo has no cause to clear off his desk. That goes without saying. It is impossible in times like these; however, when immigration is colliding with settlement and "New Zurich" is wondering whether it is still possible to patch up the marriage between Israel and America, that none of the Likud young is raising a brave and original voice that would endanger his place in the party.

It is unthinkable that Minister of Economics Magen, who is closely involved in the Russian immigration, actually believes that now is the time we must build all those villas in Ari'el, and is improbable that Meridor defended extremist positions in private talks with Jews in the retinue of American diplomats. When the Congress refused yesterday to consider the issue of loan guarantees, Olmert did well to understand that the Jewish lobby was beaten by George Bush not only on the immediate need for \$2 billion but also on a thousand other matters. I do not mock the reasons for their silence. They know that anyone who comes out now against the settlement drive commits suicide in the center of the Likud. The McCarthyites will fall on him and the political inquisition will not let go of him even if he throws himself on the nation's knees. These young ministers are hoping for the *deus ex machina* of the Japanese theater to descend from the sky and free them from the necessity of contending with the Prime Minister, for something heavenly and angelic that, without their intervention, will steer Shamir away from the plunge in relations with the United States towards a conciliatory path. It is necessary, pardon the slang, to get into their heads. They do not want to joust with Shamir. Even if they should best him, it would be a Pyrrhic victory. So they placate themselves with the idea that their influence in the government is decisive and that Shamir is bound to their inner thoughts even if they do not speak them in public.

This time, the crisis is so deep that no justification exists to continue those maneuvers typical of politicians. A double threat menaces Israel: first, that Shamir will not relent but persist in the crisis with the United States; and second, that he will yield but for little gain—they will lead him kicking and screaming to the conference and force him to give up the wave of settlements, while time grows late and the loan guarantees are not passed this year. What the young ministers must tell him is that it is not enough to surrender his petulant obstinacy; timing is critical and he must get the most that he can in return.

With their understanding of political expediency, they must know that there are situations in which the select,

who already have anointed their political heads with oil, are obliged to wrangle with their leaders in public. The example forever standing before their eyes is that of Menachem Begin, who did just that with his teacher, Zev Jabotinsky. At the decisive moment, he simply rose against his leader and never retreated even when Jabotinsky replied with sarcasm that Begin's words were like the sound of a creaking door.

Meridor and Olmert and Milo and Katzav and Magen cannot permit themselves the luxury that has afflicted the frustrated intelligentsia, which for years has been suffering an "internal decline" and has abandoned the national arena to withdraw into itself and its affairs. Olmert has escaped into the shell of doing the "really important" work of converting hospitals into public corporations; Meridor delivers radio eulogies for [the late General] Shmuel Gonen and explanations for why there is no need to call early elections; and Milo is deep in preparing the police lest the events of the Temple Mount occur again.

But the young ministers do not enjoy the public privilege of such an "internal decline." For all who pin great hopes on the them, they must struggle so that fateful decisions do not lose out to the needs of the hour.

KUWAIT

National Assembly Highlights

1 Oct Session

92AE0031A London SAWT AL-KUWAIT AL-DUWALI
in Arabic 2 Oct 91 p 4

[Article by 'Abdallah al-Shammari]

[Text] Kuwait—In its session yesterday, the National Assembly approved two draft decrees having the power of law in respect to the establishment of "The Printing and Publishing Institute", and regulating the possession of arms and ammunition. The assembly referred the two decrees to the government.

This followed the conclusion of debate on the first bill, which began last week when the assembly approved the bill in principle before it finally approved it yesterday. The assembly rejected a proposal to amend some of its articles, particularly the one relating to limiting the institute's purchase of shares in newspapers to 25 percent. The assembly also rejected amending the clause concerning subsequent oversight.

As for the bill on arms possession, it was passed without much debate.

However, like the first session, yesterday's session was characterized by some strong criticism against the Printing and Publishing Institute. Deputy Marzuq al-Hubayni sees that its objective is to take over all the

newspapers and magazines, while deputy Khalifah al-Khurafi said the government must reform itself and bring to account those who show negligence before "reforming others."

Likewise, deputy 'Abbas al-Khudari believes that "the Kuwaiti administration is in decline," and suggested learning from the "the Saudi administration's successful experiment."

On the other hand, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Nasir al-Rawdan and deputies Badr al-Bashar and Marzuq al-Hubayni praised "SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI."

As for Minister of Information Dr. Badr al-Ya'qub, he said that newspaper licenses are not concessions, and that the ministry can amend these licenses, but the Printing and Publishing Institute does not wish to "cause any harm to the newspapers."

The following are minutes of the session, which was chaired by assembly Deputy Speaker Rashid 'Awwad al-Juwaysri and a number of ministers:

The session opened at 0900 under the chairmanship of Rashid al-Juwaysri. The deputies reviewed the mistakes in the minutes and what has been published in the press in this regard. Some deputies spoke about the extinguishing [of oil wells]. Deputy 'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydali thanked the press "which points to us certain mistakes by all those who boast about their patriotism, especially now, since we need loyalty and devotion to work. It is a shame on the government to lump together thieves of al-Manakh stock market with the honest Kuwaitis who suffered losses." al-Juhaydali added: "There is also dissatisfaction with the passing of the legislation changing the citizens' pension payments. There are some newspaper writers who demand fairness toward the Arabs. I demand that first the Kuwait citizen should be treated fairly, and then the non-Kuwaiti. We should remember the Arab countries that stood on the side of the ever-criminal aggressor."

A number of deputies then spoke, and the following dialogue ensued.

Kazim 'Abbas: "Mr. Speaker, yesterday I read in SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI a statement attributed to me that was published in a distorted form. It is true that I made that statement to the paper, but the subject was long and comprehensive so as to explain the reason for withdrawing the bill regarding the Institute of Forbidding Evil."

Talal Mubarak al-'Ayyar: "A journalist has the right to write whatever he likes, but may not resort to distortion or attack the assembly. If certain papers have a particular stand toward the assembly, I hope they will not exploit details of the session in order to write whatever they like. I agree in this regard with my colleagues Dr. al-Mash'an and Khalifah al-Khurafi."

Munayzil al-'Anzi: "I am one of the deputies who have certain observations regarding the press. The press did not report all that has been taking place in the assembly. I hope that news of these sessions will be reported truthfully."

Badr al-Bashar: "Regarding the petition, there is confusion in many of its pages. The minister of information is quoted as saying that a draft has been referred to the legislative committee, while the fact is the other way round. This was wrongly reported. The National Assembly is a good model for this country. After all, it is the citizens who brought about the assembly through elections."

Saqr al-Sudan: "I was supposed to be the first speaker, but the secretariat failed to include my name. With regard to the bridge that links Faylaka to Kuwait, the subject was discussed earlier by some other people. The person who submitted the bill was not given the chance to express his views."

Mutlaq al-Shulaymi: "I ask that the list of names of speakers should be withdrawn from the secretary general because he is biased in favor of those members who are registered."

Speaker al-Juwaysri: "Please strike from the record what deputy Mutlaq al-Shumayli has said."

Saqr al-Sudan: "This statement should not be struck because it is a fact."

Muhammad al-Musaylim: "There are messages that the assembly has received but have not been entered in the register. The register has been submitted, so why this delay?"

Al-Juwaysri: "Do you approve endorsing the petition?"

Saqr al-Sudan: "I request the opinion of the constitutional expert regarding the appropriateness of the voting on Faylaka bridge. There have been time-wasting interferences."

The constitutional expert: "A draft cannot be resubmitted for discussion if its discussion has already been concluded, unless there is a demand by the assembly majority."

Muhammad al-Mash'an: "I would like to ask you, Abu-Ghanim: Do you have an economic feasibility study of this project?"

Al-Sudan: "Please play back the recorded minutes of the session in order to prove to brother al-Mash'an that I have submitted an economic feasibility study."

The assembly then moved to the second topic, which dealt with the messages received by the assembly. Secretary General Muhammad Ibrahim al-'Askari then read a complaint that the assembly received from Kuwaiti volunteers who volunteered to work in fire fighting,

saying that they have been denied allowances paid to fire fighters. They beg the assembly to help them resolve this problem.

'Abbas al-Khudari: "I support my colleague al-Bashar on the question of reporting the assembly sessions. There are seven newspapers that have failed to report the assembly sessions. This is with regard to the petition. As for the complaint, there are many complaints against the Kuwaiti administration. Those who neglect their duties toward the citizens should be brought to account. Here we have received an answer from an official regarding how deputy ministers are appointed in the ministries. It says that this depends on the candidate being capable of making decisions. What capability are we talking about? Why don't we benefit from what the Saudi administration has so successfully been doing, while the Kuwaiti administration has been in decline. Allow me to record this point in the Kuwaiti administration's file. Thank you, sir."

Muhammad al-Mash'an: "The tragic situation Kuwait is now enduring is a drop in the ocean. Kuwait is suffering from innumerable administrative problems. There are university graduates employed as assistant sanitary attendants. Here, I would like to ask the minister of municipal affairs how this came about."

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Ibrahim al-Shahin: "I hope to provide the answer to his question. Regarding the employee who claims that he has an academic degree and works as a sanitary assistant, this person did not have such a degree when he was first appointed in this job category. His position will be readjusted once he obtains his diploma."

'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydali: "I thank the "government attorney" [sarcasm] for his remarks. The complaint by my colleague al-Mash'an is not the only one. There are other cases. There is a person with long service in a certain ministry. When he obtained a university degree, they demoted him to a lower grade."

Raja al-Habbaj al-'Azimi: "If any citizen complains to the minister for whom he works so that his problem might be solved, it would be a very serious phenomenon in the country. There are people who have problems that have not been resolved in five years. I have brought to a minister's attention a problem which he promised to solve, but did not."

Muhammad [al-Mihmil]: "Regarding the complaint by the fire fighters, they should be made equal with their colleagues, especially since they have successfully completed their training courses. I hope that there will be no favoritism."

"With regard to the complaint by the citizen who has a university degree and was appointed in a job that does not fit his qualifications, the ministry of planning is supposed to have a say in the matter so that nobody will be treated unjustly."

Sa'dun al-'Utaybi: "I do not understand the reason why certain state officials should be against the appointment of Kuwaitis, and against Kuwaitization in general in the state. There are many jobs that do not need high academic diplomas. I hope the minister of municipal affairs will appoint Kuwaitis. His ministry has many job applications that are held by the director of personnel affairs. Many Kuwaiti graduates have been amazingly unjustly treated. Such policy hampers production in the state."

Marzuq al-Hubayni: "I wish the minister of state for municipal affairs would pay some attention to us. With regard to the firemen, why should they be asked for high qualifications when all their job entails is holding hose and extinguishing fires? If we look carefully into the Fire Service situation, we would find that the director general of the Fire Service did not obtain a general secondary certificate, nor did his assistants. Therefore, why create all these difficulties for the Kuwaiti citizens? Regarding the employee who works as a sanitary assistant, he should be given his rights. These matters should not be taken lightly. Rather, they should be viewed very seriously, because this is in the interest of the employees and the country. Otherwise, this will hamper their work and their productivity."

Barak al-Nun: "I hope that the minister of municipal affairs will understand these problems, because many of them, from which the citizens are suffering, will find their way to the assembly. Regarding the emir's grant for forgiving debts, some citizens have filed applications with the Credit Bank. The bank's board of directors decided to approve some of them and postpone the others. As for the citizen who obtained a university degree but his job status remained unchanged, this is a serious mistake. What should happen is to reward those who have been able to combine work with study."

Then the secretary general read a proposal by some deputies requesting moving up the general debate in the agenda, but deputy Turki Bin-Majalliyah objected. He asked that more time be given to discussing the letters received by the assembly, and then to refer the matter to the constitutional expert. A vote was then taken to refer the complaints to the special committees. This won by 42 votes. Thus, the letters were referred to the committees, and the assembly moved to the question of the Printing and Publishing Institute. Speaker al-Juwaysri asked the rapporteur to stand by.

The Secretary General then read the proposals submitted by the members for the second debate. Deputies Marzuq al-Hubayni and 'Ali al-'Utaybi submitted a proposal calling for share purchases in the local papers not to exceed 25 percent. The following debate ensued in the second debate.

Marzuq al-Hubayni: "We can see that the Institute will own 25 percent, but we believe that its main objective is to take over all the papers and magazines. For this reason, we have submitted this proposal."

Ahmad Bihbahani: "This provision was approved in the previous session, so there is no reason for amending it again."

Badr al-Bashar: "With regard to the 25 percent of the shares..."

Speaker al-Juwaysri: "Badr, sit. You are speaking out of turn. Your turn will come."

Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet affairs Nasir al-Rawdan: "The government has no intention of owning large numbers of newspapers' shares. Some newspapers are already within this Institute. They include SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI, which is a successful paper by any standard, in terms of foreign circulation. The Kuwaiti press will remain free. The government is anxious to see the Kuwaiti press remain free and outside this Institute."

Marzuq al-Hubayni: "When the government submitted this bill, we understood it to be on the basis of the written text. But what the government is intending to do is something unknown to us. Regarding what the minister said about SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI, I would say yes, this paper did play a major role, thanks to the efforts of those running it. We are interested in foreign information because this is one of the most important things for us. By defending the independence of newspapers, we mean the existing press."

Khalifah al-Khurafi: "If the government wishes to improve our lot, it should reform itself before reforming others by bringing to account those who neglect their duty. I am opposed to what my colleague Muhammad al-Barjas said. Our press should be given more freedom and facilities. Non-government newspapers would give priority to reporting the government's efforts when it completes a good project. I hope the assembly will turn down this bill in its entirety, because it does not honor Kuwait."

Minister of Information Badr al-Ya'qub: "The proposal submitted by the colleagues to limit the [Institute's] ownership of newspaper shares would restrict the Institute's aspirations. I would like to tell the proponent of the proposal that the licenses issued to the newspapers are licenses, and not concessions. Therefore, the ministry of information has the right to amend these licenses as it sees fit. Therefore, the Institute has no intention to cause harm to the existing papers and future papers."

Muhammad al-Barjas: "Information is the most important thing in the world right now. We in the committee have studied the bill thoroughly. We should not impede this proposal, which is critical for the state at this stage."

Minister of Information: "I am surprised by the brother deputies who say the bill is cultural or not cultural. I don't know on what basis they say that."

Interrupting, al-Khurafi: "Don't compare us with Britain and the United States."

Mubarak al-'Utaybi: "We should have good faith in this Institute. Therefore, the articles of the bill should remain unchanged."

Al-Hubayni defers to Khalifah al-Khurafi. al-Khurafi says: "We respect the minister of information. He should realize that we are not operating in the United States or Britain, and that we should be realistic."

Hamud al-Jabri: "We don't know the reasons for defining the rate of ownership. If the bill is contrary to the general rules governing companies and institutes, then there is no need to increase this rate if it affects the government."

The constitutional expert: "Deputy al-Jabri is completely right in what he said. The assembly must deal with this bill now; either it approves it or rejects it. For your information, amending articles of this bill will not affect the government."

Al-Juwaysri asked those deputies in favor of the amendment of ownership rate to vote for it. Only 11 deputies voted for it, and so the proposal failed. The assembly then moved on to debate an amendment proposing periodic future oversight instead of [ruling] prior oversight unadmissible.

Muhammad al-Barjas: "Brother Khalifah must realize that I mean what I say about this institute. But there appears to be concern about the 25 percent rate."

'Ali al-'Utaybi: "Regarding Article 8, the Institute should be like the rest of the institutes that are subject to the law of centralized bidding, as well as future oversight by the audit bureau. Therefore, we believe that amending this article [leads to] its becoming subject to periodic and subsequent control by the audit bureau."

(Break for noon prayer.)

The session was resumed at 1315. Deputy Khalifah al-Khurafi was permitted to speak. He said: "Mr. Speaker, with regard to the exchanges I had with colleague Muhammad al-Barjas, it was within the democratic dialogue. As for the institute in question, I believe that those who submitted this proposal should withdraw it, because this institute will not be in the interest of Kuwait. The local papers can, after developing their resources, play the required informational role."

Sa'dun al-'Utaybi: "I hope that the assembly will vote on Article 8 of the bill in order not to waste the assembly's time and so that other proposals may be duly discussed."

'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydali: "If you wish, we can vote on the bill and be finished with it in order to move on to other items on the agenda."

Hamad al-Tuwayjri: "We all are for bids to be put through the committee concerned, ie., the central bidding committee. We support the idea that we should

keep this institute separate from the committee. The proposal on the question of periodic future oversight has already been endorsed."

Badr al-Bashar: "We highly appreciate our local press, especially SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI. This paper is "the voice of the silent majority of the citizens." I agree with colleague al-Tuwayajri on that. Thank you."

The constitutional expert: "The exemption from oversight is provided for in the law under Article 7. But it cannot be exempted from being subject to the public bidding law."

Kazim Abu-'Abbas: "There are many institutes, including the Kuwaiti Airlines institute and KUNA [Kuwait News Agency], that are not subject to prior audit. There are many others too. Therefore, I agree with colleague Badr al-Bashar's valuable view."

Al-Juwaysri: "If you agree on voting, put up your hands."

Of the deputies, 45 voted for concluding the debate.

Minister of Information: "A vote should be taken on the two articles first, and then we should look into the proposal submitted by the two deputies."

Marzuq al-Hubayni: "I believe that the matter is actually bigger than the minister says, i.e., that it is just an institute for publishing and printing and books. I see otherwise; the institute's income is tens of millions of dinars."

Then vote was taken on Article 8, as submitted by the information committee, by calling the roll. Forty-five voted for, six abstained, and five were against. Therefore, amendments of the articles of the bill concerning the institute provide for increasing the number of members of the board of directors from six to eight, and having ministers, not the chairman of the board of directors, appoint the institute's director general.

The bill was then referred to the government for final approval.

At 1400, the assembly moved to debate the bill on possession of arms and ammunition, which had been referred to it by the government. Rapporteur of the Committee of Internal Security and Defense 'Ashur al-Sabbagh was asked to read the report of the committee assigned to study the bill.

The speaker asked the assembly to vote on the committee's amendment of the original article concerning the type of weapons. The committee included automatic weapons as weapons whose ownership by the general public is prohibited. The possession of machine guns and other heavy weapons is banned.

Mubarak al-Utaybi: "The sentence 'those who were convicted for committing homicide are banned' should be added, because this proposal permits such people to

carry arms. That is, such a person should keep the weapon at home and not carry it in public places."

Minister of Interior Ahmad al-Hammud: "I would like to explain to Dr. Mubarak that possessing arms does not mean carrying them."

Nasir al-Rawdan: "If a person is convicted for committing a crime, then he cannot carry arms."

Dr. 'Abdallah al-'Umar: "If a person wants to commit a crime he will do so without carrying arms. Therefore, we should not give firearms licenses to any citizen convicted of a crime, so that the potential danger will not be greater."

Raja al-Habbaj al-'Azimi: "I do not approve of this bill on arms carrying, unless the minister of interior approves of such arms. Thank you."

Hisam al-Rumi deferred to al-Munayzil al-'Azzi who said: "We should finish with this subject by deciding not to give licenses for firearms possession to anyone who was convicted for murder or for a security violation crime."

Ibrahim Hammud Bursali: "The provisions of the law are clear. They provide that a person carrying arms should not be a pauper and should have an income. Therefore, there is no need to include additional conditions with regard to arms licensing. They are comprehensive and appropriate."

The assembly then voted on Article 8. It was passed by 43 votes.

Rapporteur 'Ashur al-Sabbagh continued to read articles of the bill with no objections by the deputies.

Barak al-Nun: "We should not include the provision of literacy as qualification for carrying arms because there are many Kuwaiti citizens who are illiterate, and therefore I ask that this provision be deleted from the bill."

Minister of Interior Shaykh Ahmad al-Hammud: "This condition applies to those who trade in arms and wish to import arms so that they can have two ledgers for registering and selling arms. Therefore, the ability to read and write is extremely necessary. There is no going back on it."

'Abbas al-Khudari: "In fact, I disagree with al-Nun. It should be a condition that whoever carries arms or applies for a license should at least have a general secondary certificate."

The assembly members laughed at this impossible condition by al-Khudari.

The constitutional expert: "There is nothing in the Kuwaiti constitution called confiscation and, therefore, confiscation of arms is illegal."

The minister of information: "The present measure being taken by the ministry of interior is not considered

confiscation. In fact, it is a precautionary measure, or seizure, until a judicial decision is issued in this regard."

Rapporteur al-Sabbagh then continued to read the provisions, and the assembly passed them without giving an opinion on them.

Fayiz al-Bughayli: "The bill's provisions deal with machine guns, rockets, and explosives of all kinds, which are available in most houses. Why are no conditions and controls made for other types of arms?"

Khalaf al-'Anzi: "The public has begun grumbling about arms carrying. Therefore, I call on the assembly to ask the government to emplace new and strict controls, and not to be content with the provisions of the 1960 laws. Immunity from punishment encourages misbehavior." [Arabic proverb]

Chairman of the Interior and Defense Affairs Committee 'Abd al-Karim al-Juhaydali: "I would like to thank Abu-Mash'al for this remark, and tell him that we have extended the period [not further specified] to seven instead of five. I hope that this article will be approved."

Speaker al-Juwaysri: "Those who approve raise their hands."

The article was passed as it originally came in the bill.

Interrupting, Fayiz al-Bughayli said: "Where is the government representative's answer to my question regarding explosives, heavy weapons, various types of bombs, and rockets?"

But rapporteur 'Ashur al-Sabbagh continued to read Article 22.

Minister of Interior: Regarding the question of explosives and heavy weapons that the deputy has brought up, I would like to reassure him that there is a special law for that. I am saying this for your information."

Khalaf al-'Anzi: I ask that punishment for carrying arms at weddings and other occasions be doubled, because we hear heavy shooting every time there is such an occasion."

Minister al-Rawdan: "We should differentiate between the penalty for carrying arms and the use of arms, because the penalty for carrying arms should be tougher than that of carrying arms without using them."

Speaker al-Juwaysri: "Does the assembly approve the bill dealt with in the first debate?"

The assembly: "We approve."

al-Juwaysri: "Does the assembly approve the second debate, too?"

The secretary general and his assistants counted the votes and the second debate won by 45 votes.

The assembly then voted by calling the deputies' names. The bill [not further specified] was passed by 50 votes. The bill was referred to the government for final approval.

The assembly then moved to discuss reports on the National Assembly's budget. Secretary General Muhammad al-'Askari got up and read the text of the budget bill. Deputies 'Abbas al-Khudari and Khalaf al-'Anzi protested because the report was not distributed to the deputies.

Speaker al-Juwaysri then invited Ya'qub al-Sharhan, rapporteur of the finance and economic committee, to go to the podium, which he did.

The session was then recessed for afternoon prayers. But after the prayers there was no quorum. Talal al-'Ayyar, who assumed the chairmanship at 1600, announced that the session would recess. It will be resumed next Tuesday morning.

[Boxed item: Highlights of the Sessions]

Deputy prime minister and foreign minister took part in the session from the beginning and left when it recessed for prayers.

When the session was recessed at 1600, the majority of deputies characterized it as the "government laws" session, since two bills were passed, one on the Printing and Publishing Institute and the other on arms and ammunition.

More than once, Deputy Speaker al-Juwaysri threatened to wind up the session if members did not stop talking during the debate. This was welcome by some of the deputies who were concerned about the time.

Deputy 'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydali was anxious to see that the bill was passed as submitted by the committee concerned, in view of his being chairman of the assembly's Internal and Defense Affairs Committee.

Minister of Information Badr Jasim al-Ya'qub, Housing Minister Muhammad 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-'Asfur, and Interior Minister Shaykh Ahmad al-Hammud were frequently whispering among themselves, but were interrupted by Deputy 'Adil al-Jiran telling them: "Would you make way for me so that I can get to my seat?" The housing minister looked up and laughed.

At 1400 many of the deputies were clamoring that time was up, saying "[going without] lunch has affected us." Commenting, Badr al-Bashar said: "Had the speaker known, he would not have allowed time for lunch."

Deputy Ahmad al-Barjas asked about colleague Husayn 'Abd-al-Rahman. The SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI correspondent told him that Husayn works in the newspaper's kitchen in London. Because al-Barjas belongs to the media, he said: "He deserves it." Overhearing this, deputy Khalaf al-Tamimi said: "He works as cook and yet you say he deserves it?"

A journalist asked the minister of state for housing affairs why, a month ago, he did not leave his office in the ministries' compound when the siren was sounded warning of a possible explosion in the compound. al-'Asfur said: "This is the least I could as a responsible official. How can I leave the staff and walk out?"

Talal al-'Ayyar headed the session for five minutes, but because there was no quorum, the session was postponed. He said this was a kind of viciousness by some deputies, who walked out.

'Abbas al-Khudari said that all the "seven" papers have been unable to report what went on at the session. But during the break he told a SAWT al-KUWAIT al-DUWALI reporter: "That doesn't include you." [End of box]

2 Oct Session

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in Arabic 9 Oct 91 p 4

[Report by 'Abdallah al-Shammari]

[Text] The National Assembly held a session yesterday in the presence of His Highness Crown Prince Prime Minister Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah. Speaker 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Masa'id opened the session, which began by endorsing the minutes of the previous session.

A number of proposals submitted by the deputies concerning financial matters of interest to the citizens were discussed.

A number of deputies criticized the manner in which the government is dealing with the assembly and its indifference to the citizens' problems. They attributed this to the government's administrative incompetence.

Also, a number of deputies strongly criticized the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for failing to deal with problems of those who suffered from the Iraqi invasion.

A deputy criticized the government for still failing to honor Kuwaiti martyrs despite the passage of seven months since liberation.

Some of the deputies sharply criticized the Kuwaiti press, accusing some of the journalists of hurting the assembly's reputation and misinterpreting what is going on in it.

Speaker 'Abd-al-'Aziz opened the session at 0900, and Secretary General Muhammad Ibrahim al-'Askari read the names of those who excused themselves from attending and the absent ones.

Item 1 on the agenda:

Speaker al-Masa'id: "The minutes of the [previous] session have been distributed to you. Any remarks?"

The assembly made no response.

Speaker: "Then you approve it. The assembly approved it without making any remarks and without debate, which is unprecedented."

'Abbas al-Khudari: "I would like to express my thanks to chief editor of al-FAJR al-JADID newspaper."

Khalifah al-Khurafi: "This assembly, God willing, is a good assembly. Therefore, this assembly is eager to take any steps that would serve the country. The press [articles] and the minutes of the session are well-linked. I would like to salute the British Ambassador who is amongst us in this session. The assembly is called upon to maintain a consensus within itself, particularly since Iraq still constitutes a danger to Kuwait. Therefore, I call for agreement between us and all the political parties in the country."

Al-Masa'id: "We have no political parties in Kuwait."

Ibrahim Bursali: "I join my voice to that of the colleagues regarding the journalists who do not report these sessions truthfully and factually, and thus change the facts and meanings. I say woe to journalists."

'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydali: "I do not wish to blame the press, since the minister of information himself has refused to publish details of a session that all the foreign newspapers published, but which was banned from being published locally. Laws are applied to certain citizens but not to some others. We have pledged to be defenders of this country, and we will remain so. There are those who sympathize with some people that did not care for the Kuwaiti people during the occupation and its present hardship."

Muhammad al-Hajraf: "A point of order. There should be no departure from the topic under discussion. This would be a waste of time. Please pay attention."

Muhammad al-Barjas: "Who would respond to the call [of duty] when it comes? The fact is that today's minutes, on the basis of my reading of them, show that the deputies are serious in their debates. When these people speak, Mr. Speaker, the government does not listen to them. We and the government are worlds apart. The government deals with the deputies' demands with indifference. The ministers only shake their heads, but we get nothing."

"We must realize that the appointed deputies were chosen by the leader of the people, who was chosen by his grandfather. Therefore, the assembly members are not "nincompoops." Some of the deputies have unfortunately turned this assembly into a "Hyde Park." [speakers' corner]

Dari al-'Uthman: "I am surprised by the honorable deputy's statement that the government and the deputies are far apart. The assembly is the haven for the government in everything it wants to do. The evidence is the fact that, despite numerous questions, the government tries to answer them. Moreover, it accepts whatever subject the deputies raise with it. I must point out that he

who works is bound sometimes to tumble into some negative things. I would like to reaffirm that the government appreciates the National Assembly and respects it."

Dr. Habib Sha'ban: "I defer to my colleague Yusuf al-Majid.

Al-Majid: "I would like to congratulate the Egyptian people on the 6 October [1973 War] anniversary. I feel proud that Egypt is honoring those heroes on this occasion, while Kuwait, seven months after the war, did not honor any of the Kuwaiti martyrs. I would like to ask the government to specify a date for honoring the martyrs through their families."

Dari al-'Uthman: "We have not failed to look after families of the martyrs. I would like to refer to the decree which calls for honoring those martyrs."

'Ali al-'Umar: "I agree with colleague Yusuf al-Majid in what he said. There have been several decrees regarding the question of POWs, but they have not been implemented. I am a member of the committee on POWs, and I would like to call on the Kuwaiti Government to form a committee to go to Iraq to investigate the fate of the prisoners and missing persons on the basis of the decision taken by the committees now in Iraq searching for destructive weapons."

Minister of State al-'Uthman: "Truly, the honorable deputy's statement is confusing. He combined honoring the martyrs with the question of the POWs. If the deputy has any proposal, let him submit it, but I cannot say when the proposal can be implemented. From this forum, I would like to appeal to all the world countries, especially the major powers, to bring pressure to bear on Iraq in order to release the prisoners."

Khalaf Dumaythir al-'Anzi: "In fact, I am not one of those who talk about the press, but there are shortcomings on its part. Sometimes large spaces and pictures are devoted [to certain people], while some others are not mentioned or mentioned only briefly, depending on personal relations with the editor-in-chief.

"We now miss the non-Kuwaiti journalists who used to report news accurately. Although we are very proud of al-QABAS, I have some blame to lay on it. We hope that the objective is not to distort the National Assembly's image. There are journalists who are intruders and amateurs in the field of journalism."

Speaker al-Masa'id: "Thanks to brother Khalaf. I would like journalists who report the assembly sessions to be accurate in their reports about the assembly. This is also the responsibility of the minister of information, who is amongst us."

Secretary General al-'Askari then read certain proposals submitted by the deputies that came with the messages received.

Al-Masa'id: "These remarks and petitions that came with the mail are to be referred to the complaints committee."

Deputies raised objections to referring these to the complaints committee without submitting them for discussion.

The constitutional expert: "According to Article 43, notes and memos should be discussed before they are referred to the complaints committee, but it may be noted in the agenda that they are not to be discussed before they go to the committee concerned."

Voices were raised asking to comment on the constitutional expert's views.

'Abbas al-Khudari: "The referral is correct, but there should be no objection to expressing views on them before they are referred to the committee."

Dumaythir al-'Anzi: "It was previously customary for these complaints and petitions to be discussed before they were referred to the committee. This was the custom."

Al-Masa'id: "Let's leave custom aside. We have a law that is quite clear and there is no need for custom."

Al-Juhaydali: "I would like every deputy to be given five minutes for discussion. This is not against Article 43."

Sa'dun al-'Utaybi: "Every deputy has a right to express his views."

Al-Masa'id: "Those who are for the debate should raise their hands."

Hamad al-Tuwayjari: "It is not permissible to vote on an article of the statutes."

Al-Masa'id: "We have given you an opportunity and you have consulted the constitutional expert. Therefore, the papers should be referred to the committee."

The deputies loudly protested against the speaker's decision.

Al-Juhaydali went to the constitutional expert to seek his views on the matter, and calm prevailed for some time.

Al-Masa'id: "Those who are for opening a debate should raise their hands."

The deputies protest unanimously against voting.

Al-Masa'id: "You don't want democracy—voting. Therefore, the papers should go to the committee.

"The Secretary General should read the following provision.

[Interrupting] Hamad al-Tuwayjari: "This measure is unacceptable; debate should be initiated in accordance with the statutes."

Al-Masa'id: "I have just received a report saying that Kuwait has been accepted for World Parliamentary Federation membership. Deputy Talal al-'Ayyar, head of the National Assembly delegation, delivered Kuwait's speech at the conference held in Chile.

"Despite the fact that I believe that the constitution expert's views are correct, I have decided to give you the right to debate."

'Abbas al-Khudari: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your magnanimity and sporting spirit. There are houses in al-'Aqaylah district [Mushash Ibn 'Awsaj] that are collapsing. These houses are built of mud bricks. There are also houses in [Abraq] Khitan and al-Sulaybikhat built of concrete. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to his highness the crown prince and prime minister, with whom I met, together with my colleague 'Ashur al-Sabbagh, because of the understanding of this problem he has shown. There are problems that haven't yet been resolved in several areas. There are houses belonging to martyrs' parents that have been destroyed by fifth columnists. The promises given to them haven't been fulfilled. The minister of housing was not remiss in his duties, but he hasn't completed the work. Who is responsible for this negligence?"

Minister of Municipal Affairs Dr. al-Shahin: "The citizens want their houses that were built in 1975 to be appraised. al-Khudari was member of the appraisal committee."

Minister of Housing al-'Asfur: "It is my duty to state that rents were paid to owners of houses that have been damaged. Work on repairing these houses has begun. As for the houses that were destroyed after the liberation, there is need for certain necessary controls in order to consider whether they are to be compensated or be paid rents."

Dr. Muhammad al-Haddad: "I have learned that the World Parliamentary Federation has banned Iraq from participating in its conference. I wish to thank members of the Kuwaiti delegation for having clarified the truth, for there were some among those delegations who sought to create chaos."

Marzuq al-Hubayni: "Any complaint received by the assembly is an indication of the government's administrative failure and inability to confront problems. I wish the minister of municipal affairs would answer an invitation by a citizen from al-'Aqaylah district. I am sure he won't be able to eat lunch there because of the disgusting scenery and of the view of collapsing houses. The minister of municipal affairs should not refer this matter to the committee on municipal affairs."

Hamdi al-Tuwayjari: "I wish to thank the Kuwaiti delegation that participated in the European conference. This is the best evidence of the fact that democracy in Kuwait exists. There are certain suspect elements though, elements that receive things from other people in return for standing against Kuwait. This is a great

achievement for the National Assembly; it proves that democracy exists in Kuwait and was never absent.

"On the question of appraisals, it is true that there are some people whose appraisal was unfair. I would like to say to the government: 'Fear God in dealing with the people's rights.' Why did they not admit their mistake and why did they claim it was an engineering mistake?"

Husam al-Rumi: "The report by the delegation that attended the World Parliamentary Federation has been submitted to us. But, when the delegates met Mr. [Andre], the Algerian delegate Belkhadem complained about the sufferings of the Iraqi people. The Kuwaiti delegation refused to participate with the Arab delegation. But why did the Kuwaiti delegates not protest against the Algerian delegate's statement and respond to what he said?"

'Ashur al-Sabbagh: "Why does the government not help the citizens who have complaints and solve their problems without them having to turn to the assembly, since they have a right [to be heard by the minister]?"

Al-Juhaydali: "I wish to thank the speaker for conveying the news regarding the acceptance of Kuwait in the World Parliamentary Federation membership. With regard to King Husayn, he is wicked and he has been a liar since he came out of his mother's womb. Both he and the liar 'Arafat tell many lies about Kuwait and sympathize with Iraq. [shifts topics] As for the municipality, it made a decision that was issued 20 years ago. The municipality implements decisions according to its own interests and the interests of certain people. The problem of the municipality is one of the biggest problems in the Middle East. We must seek help from Gorbachev in order to solve the problem of the houses in al-'Aqaylah and Julayb al-Shuyukh. That is, unless the municipality wants the al-'Aqaylah people to be buried in their houses."

Dr. al-Shahin: "I wish to thank the deputy and assure him that we in the government precisely implement all the rules and regulations in favor of the citizens. They will get their rights."

Jasim Qabazard: "I wish to thank the brothers who have already spoken about complaints. It is obvious that the government does not sympathize with the citizens' problems. Kuwait is now in an exceptional situation and, therefore, decisions should be implemented in an exceptional manner. A citizen from al-Rumaythah district filed a complaint with the government regarding his house—half of which was burnt. They told him that if his house was entirely burnt, then they could help him. But as long as only half of it was burnt, then they could not do that."

Dr. 'Abdallah al-'Umar: "When Belkhadem [Algerian delegate to the World Parliamentary Federation] intervened in favor of Iraq, he attempted to break the blockade on Iraq. Were it not for the French Government banning the Iraqi delegation, and for the Belgian

Government's stand in refusing to give entry visas to any of the Iraqi delegates—if it were not for this, there would have been a debate among the participating delegates.”

The Secretary General read a proposal submitted by some members calling for submitting the debate of the committees' reports for general discussion and seeking clarifications. The assembly took a vote on it, and it was accepted by the great majority.

'Abd-al-Latif al-Bahr, the committee chairman, read a report on a number of proposals submitted by the deputies regarding financial matters concerning the citizens. There were six proposals.

Hisam al-Rumi: “I support approval of this report, which concerns improving the citizens' life.”

Munayzil al-'Anzi: “There are unemployed Kuwaitis whose problem should be resolved. I support this report, which covers this aspect.”

'Ali al-'Umar: Regarding the unemployed Kuwaitis in the private sector, I would like to say that the unjust invasion has considerably increased the sufferings of these citizens.”

'Abbas al-Khudari: “Social security is supposed to help the citizens who suffered.”

The vote was taken on the report. It passed by 41 votes.

Dari al-'Uthman: “The government appreciates the assembly's interest in this project, and it will seek to implement it, and it will cooperate in implementing it rapidly.”

Al-Masa'id: “I approve the report. It is to be referred to the government for implementation.”

Committee rapporteur Jawwad al-Matrak read a complaint regarding a citizen's application for a loan from the Credit Bank.

'Ali al-'Umar: “I wish to thank the government and the Credit Bank, and I hope that the government will solve the rest of the problems.”

'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydali: “There are some citizens' whose guardians sold a share of their ward's estate inheritance. Meanwhile, the housing authority did not put them on the housing list. So please solve this problem. This report is good and should be approved.”

Al-Masa'id: “We approved this report, and the assembly approved it.”

Rapporteur al-Matrak then read the committee report regarding a complaint by a citizen about opening an automobile showroom in the al-Shuwaykh industrial zone. The committee recommended that this is to be allowed.

Husam al-Rumi: “I support the committee's decision to permit the complainant to open a showroom.”

Al-Juhaydali: “I wish to thank the committee, but the municipality inspectors ban the Kuwaitis, while they allow the non-Kuwaiti investors to set up such showrooms. I am confident that the minister of municipal affairs is capable of bringing to account those who harass the Kuwaitis, while they allow only the big shotsto utilize the vast lands.”

Al-Masa'id: “Does the assembly approve this report?”

The assembly: “We approve. The report is referred to the government for implementation.”

'Ashur al-Sabbagh, the committee rapporteur, read a report regarding putting strict security in schools.

The Speaker: “Does the assembly approve?”

The assembly: “Yes, we approve the report without debate.” The report was then referred to the government. Secretary General al-'Askari read a proposal submitted by deputy 'Abdallah al-Khudayr. Then committee rapporteur al-Sabbagh was given the turn to speak. He continued reading the report about reopening the al-Ahmadi passport office.

The assembly: “We approve.”

Al-Sabbagh then read a report on a proposal by deputy Khalifah al-Khurafi concerning moving the ministry of interior's building to another area for the sake of the al-Shamiyah residents' comfort.

The assembly: “We approve this report.”

The committee did not approve a proposal on forgiving debts of farmers who suffered damagesbecause it would cost more than 98 million dinars and because compensations for property and other losses would be confusing.

Muhammad al-Mash'an: “Most of the proposals either call for forgiving debts or demand compensation. If we continue at this rate, the state will be bankrupt in no time.”

Marzuq al-Hubayni: “The committee has linked the loans for the agricultural sector with those of industrial sector. The industrial sector loans total 93 million Kuwaiti dinars while the agricultural sector loans total only 4 million indars, bearing in mind that the agricultural sector contributes to helping the citizens and therefore deserves aid, while the industrial sector concerns individuals. That is speaking plainly about the difference. Therefore, I call for separating the agricultural sector from the industrial sector.”

'Abd-al-Latif al-Bahr, chairman of the Finance Committee: “I agree with my colleague al-Hubayni, but when the committee made this decision, it was from the idea that the productive sectors are one. It is true that allocations for the agricultural sector are small, but it would open the door to forgiving debts for many other sectors.”

Al-Haddad: "I support what my colleague 'Abd-al-Latif al-Bahr said about this report and I agree with him 100 percent."

Munayzil al-'Anzi: "I ask for the report to be returned to the Financial Committee for review, because the amount is so small and it concerns a large sector of Kuwaiti farmers."

'Abd-al-Latif al-Bahr: "We did not reject the principle of compensating the farmers, but we have been compelled to merge it with the other productive state sectors, and we did not wish to separate one sector from another."

'Ali Husayn al-'Umar: "I defer to Barak al-Nun."

Barak al-Nun: Sir, I would not like at all to see members of the Financial Committee linking the real estate and commerce sectors with the agricultural sector. The industrial sector is also of great importance. So why do my colleagues, the committee members, link the real estate sector and the agricultural sector? This is an injustice against the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector is suffering the same injustice as the real estate sector has suffered. We absolutely cannot link them.

"I personally regard this as tantamount to killing the country's agricultural and industrial sectors. It drives capital abroad."

Jaasim Qabazard: "If we, in the assembly, accept that the amounts are small, then this would be a problem because the accumulation of amounts causes a state budget deficit. The government must first determine for us the amounts we can spend from the budget under the present circumstances."

Khalaf Dumaythir al-'Anzi: "Regarding the industrial sector, the government always stood on industry's side. But industry in Kuwait proved to be a failure. In my view, we cannot combine the failed industrial sector with the successful agricultural sector. If the government is considering resolving the difficult problem of debts, which involves large amounts of money that this citizen [not further specified] borrowed and took abroad, later claiming that he lost them, then these amounts reach more than 5 million [dinars] per person. There is a clear conflict here between resolving the problems of individuals who probably were engaged in fraudulent deals in the al-Manakh [stock] market [sentence incomplete] Where were those millionaires who never donated anything during the invasion? I challenge anybody who claims that one single citizen donated to Kuwaiti citizens at home or abroad."

The assembly protested against al-'Anzi's statement, but the speaker gave him the right to continue, saying: "Wait till he finishes and then whoever wants to comment may do so."

Dumaythir al-'Anzi: "All the Kuwaiti people bear witness to this failure on the part of Kuwaiti business people during the crisis. The government today wants to solve their suspicious financial problem."

Minister of State al-'Uthman: "I wish the honorable deputy would understand that the object of resolving the difficult debt problem is to invigorate the Kuwaiti economic market and not to solve the problems of those engaged in fraud."

Rashid 'Awwad al-Juwaysri: "I consider the agricultural sector as the [economic] backbone. I believe that the matter should be referred to the committee to be studied properly, so as to be fair to this category of citizens."

'Abd-al-Latif al-Bahr: Regarding colleague Khalaf's statement that we think with our emotions, this is not true. Rather, we take into consideration all the problems, whether they concern the citizens or the government."

A verbal duel ensued between deputies al-Juwaysri, al-Juhaydali, 'Ali 'Umar and al-Bashar. al-Bashar tore up the statute papers.

Interrupting the loud voices, al-Masa'id said: "Those who are in favor of returning the report to the committee, raise their hands."

al-Bashar was permitted to speak. He said: "Kuwaiti businessmen in the past and the present. [sentence as published] I wish the deputy was around during the occupation to see what Kuwaiti businessmen have done. You claim that the government has struck these debts [from the books], but this is not the case."

Al-Masa'id: "You have exceeded your time, Badr. Be quiet."

Khalaf al-'Anzi: "I do not want anybody to get on my back. Badr al-Bashar wants to deny me my right to speak. I know what I am saying."

'Ali al-'Umar: "We are in the assembly, and there should be no competition among the National Assembly members. I would say that if the government pardons the citizens' debts, this would create confusion and financial instability."

Sa'dun al-'Utaybi: "Why was some people's appetite for speaking whetted when deputy Khalaf spoke? I ask those people to go back to the registers when the destroyer of Iraq asked for the reconstruction of al-Faw [not further specified]. I have many documents incriminating the oil sector, and I will uncover the fraudulent financial dealings when the oil policy will be debated. The farmers' problem must be solved."

Minister of State al-'Uthman: "Please delete from the record what the the honorable deputy said about the former oil minister. This minister, like all ministers then, was a hard worker."

Sa'dun al-'Utaybi: "I hope that former oil minister Dr. al-'Amiri's standing will not be belittled. He was the one who laid the strategy of extinguishing the oil wells during the first three months. He was one of the best ministers. I will uncover many facts during the discussion on the oil policy."

Badr al-Bashar: "The government must close down every unsuccessful project, regardless of what it is, because this will strengthen agricultural and industrial output. I ask that what has been said against Kuwaiti businessmen be struck from the records."

Al-Juwaysri: "I wish brother Badr al-Bashar would understand that most of the Kuwaiti farmers have sold a major portion of their pensions in order to develop Kuwaiti lands. Therefore, I hope this project will be voted on and be urgently referred to the committee for endorsement. I would like to mention that when the Kuwaiti farmer was working, the price of tomatoes was only 50 fils per kg."

Hamad al-Tuwayjari: "I believe that any debts, whether industrial or agricultural, fall within the category of difficult debts. Therefore, we must differentiate between those who are serious and all the others in the production fields. Therefore, I request that the project be sent back to the committee for further study and consultation."

Speaker al-Masa'id asked for the project to be returned to the committee. When the vote was taken, only 26 voted for it, and so the project failed. A vote was then taken on the committee report, but it failed, since only 33 voted for it. The speaker ordered that it be suspended since it failed on both counts.

The assembly then went on to debate the question of POWs and missing persons. The speaker asked for a vote on opening debate on this topic, but this failed also. Speaker al-Masa'id recessed the session until next Tuesday.

[Boxed item: His Highness Crown Prince Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah attended the session from 1015 until 1320. He then performed the noon prayer with Speaker al-Masa'id, his deputy al-Juwaysari, and the ministers in the speaker's office.

The presence of His Highness Crown Prince Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah brought about calm in the assembly hall and was the reason for less talk by deputies during the debate. "We wish his highness would always attend so that we could enjoy the calm," remarked one of the deputies.

When Speaker al-Masa'id recessed the session at about 1320, it was obviously agreeable to most of the deputies, since none of them protested.

Speaker al-Masa'id told deputy Badr al-Bashar, when he sang the praise of Kuwait while commenting on his colleague Khalaf al-'Anzi's statement, "repeat what you said, Badr al-Bashar; let's hear those nice words again," upon which the deputies laughed.

Deputy 'Uthman al-Najdi told his colleague Badr al-Bashar: "Vote, vote on the committee's report." "On

which report? There are more than 20 reports," al-Bashar asked. "On no confidence," al-Najdi said. al-Bashar put up his hand. "Maybe he is voting no confidence in you, and not on the report," remarked Khalaf al-Tamimi. The three deputies laughed.

The minister of defense walked into the hall at about 1030. Whispering among themselves, the journalists said: "Certainly there is something concerning the Defense Ministry and so the session will be held in camera."

Most of the deputies wore abas [Arab cloak], which was an indication for the journalists that the crown prince/prime minister would attend the session.

Deputies Badr al-Bashar, Khalaf al-'Anzi, 'Ali al-'Umar, and 'Abbas al-Khudari engaged in a verbal clash. al-'Anzi and al-Bashar were the most emotional when the discussion dealt with the proposal for cancelling debts for the farmers and the industrialists. al-Bashar was so furious that he tore up his papers.

When the session recessed, several deputies, including 'Abbas al-Khudari and Salman al-'Azimi, went to the minister of education and castigated him for refusing to approve the transfer of some female teachers who badly needed a transfer. The situation ended with no results and with the deputies being displeased.

Twenty assembly members accepted an invitation to visit the fires in the petroleum sector at the invitation of the governor of al-Ahmadi at 0830 AM today. The public relations [office] distributed these invitations to the members entering the assembly hall.

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dari al-'Uthman returned from his vacation. He answered all the questions the deputies put to him concerning the government. He was calm, contrary to his behavior in previous sessions, when sometimes he was overtaken by emotions. "The minister is rested and his answers are convincing," remarked deputy 'Adil al-Jiran.

When some deputies spoke about the press and about inaccurate reporting of the assembly sessions, the journalists held a meeting among themselves. As a result, at 1900, the assembly general secretariat distributed copies of the minutes of the session to all the journalists by computer, whereas before, this depended on personal endeavor and follow-up.

Those who excused themselves from attending were: Talal Mubarak al-'Ayyar, Muhammad al-'Abd al-Jalil, Ya'qub al-Sharhan, Kazim Bu-'Abbas, Mutalliq al-[Shalimi], Hammud al-Jabri, 'Abdallah al-Hajiri, and Muslih Humayjan.

The first part of the session was attended by the British ambassador, who was accompanied by some British diplomats. The deputies welcomed them when they were given the turn to speak.

The deputies applauded loudly when deputy al-Barjas finished talking about the government. [End of box]

LEBANON

Al-Harawi on Foreign Relations, Domestic Issues

92AE0050A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
25 Oct 91 p 3

[Interview With Lebanese President Ilyas al-Harawi by Shukri Nasrallah in Paris, date not given; "Lebanese President Ilyas al-Harawi to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Are Going to Madrid, Will Not Miss This Opportunity; Concordance Procession Will Be Crowned Shortly With Comprehensive National Reconciliation"]

[Text] Paris, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Lebanese President Ilyas al-Harawi has asserted that his visit to France that ended today has achieved all the desired objectives. [He said] "I am confident that the French Government will soon resume aiding Lebanon with all that it needs, whether in terms of loans or of supplying the army with the needed equipment and spare parts." In an exclusive interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, President al-Harawi has also said that "France may contribute effectively to the international fund for the reconstruction of Lebanon, but that it will begin with its in-kind aid first. This is the aid to which we give priority now." President al-Harawi has disclosed the Lebanese Government's decision to invite all the Lebanese religious factions, parties, and organizations to hold a comprehensive national reconciliation conference, adding: "All Lebanese factions are invited to this reconciliation, with which we will complete the national concordance procession." He also said that Lebanon will take part in the Madrid conference "because we are concerned with the Arab issues, exactly the same as our Arab brothers." He added: "Our territory is also occupied and we will not miss such an international opportunity to present our issue, even though the resolutions involved in this issue are different from those that concern the Middle East issue: [UN Resolution] 425 (concerns Lebanon), [and Resolutions] 242 and 338 concern the occupied Arab territories." He said Lebanon is serious about holding general parliamentary elections but that this step is tied to the peace conference and to achieving Israel's withdrawal, so that all Lebanese can select their representatives freely and democratically. He further said: "Our waters are barely enough for us, and so we cannot conclude agreements with others. We are not a country that is that rich in water."

On the lack of harmony in the Lebanese Government, he said: "This is normal. This cabinet is a consensus government that encompasses all the feuding factions. Therefore, it is inevitable that it cannot be one person's or one faction's government." He added: "What I am personally proud of is that I am not partisan, so that I would consider settling my accounts with other parties. I am not factional, and I am honored that my hands have not been soiled with blood and with the settling of

accounts." He also said: "Lebanon will regain its past condition. But it will be a Lebanon for all the Lebanese without exception." Following is the text of the interview with Lebanese President Ilyas al-Harawi:

[Nasrallah] What aid and loans has the French president promised you?

[al-Harawi] For us, we wanted this visit to eliminate the clouds of the past and to turn a new page of mutual friendship and respect. It has been a good opportunity, in which France and Lebanon have expressed their wish to restore good relations between them, without the negative traces of the past. On this basis, we find that France will restore its aid to Lebanon, exactly as it was in the past.

[Nasrallah] Militarily, you have requested equipment, vehicles, helicopters, and other things. Have you gotten them?

[al-Harawi] Not now. We will not return to Beirut in a week loaded with equipment and vehicles. But I have felt utter readiness on the part of the French president. During our meeting, he summoned the minister of defense and asked him to speed up studying and fulfilling Lebanon's requests and to give them absolute priority in the French Government meetings.

[Nasrallah] Culturally, has the same thing happened?

[al-Harawi] Yes, the same thing has happened. President Mitterand summoned Minister of Culture Jack Lang and instructed him to give priority to Lebanon's requests and needs. I will not conceal from you that the implementation of cultural aid, such as supplying us with school and university books and equipment, has actually started.

[Nasrallah] And financial loans?

[al-Harawi] The same goes for financial loans. While I am meeting with you, the French minister of finance is meeting with Lebanese Minister of Economy Marwan Hamadah and Johnny 'Abduh, our ambassador to France, to coordinate Lebanon's requests. Let me make it clear to you here that Lebanon doesn't insist on getting financial loans. Rather, we need in-kind aid because of the devastation that has afflicted the infrastructure and Lebanese institutions.

[Nasrallah] Let us move to French political aid. Have you asked for French support in Madrid and in Tel Aviv for Lebanon's position on the peace conference and on Israel's withdrawal in implementation of Resolution 425?

[al-Harawi] France is a permanent Security Council member. Even though the Madrid conference sponsors are the United States and the Soviet Union, France continues to have its international and European influence. I am confident that France will hold a special place in the Madrid talks by virtue of its international position. Therefore, there is no doubt that we will need its assistance. I have asked France for this assistance and it

has received the request with welcome. It will assist us in the Madrid conference and in connection with Israel's withdrawal, either from within or from outside the conference. Our demand is just and is approved by the highest international authority, namely the Security Council. On this basis, France will support us to liberate our land and to bolster the peace conference that calls for "exchanging land for peace."

[Nasrallah] The water issue tops the agenda of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, and there is serious talk in some international circles about water accords, especially between Lebanon and Israel, to replace Israel's control of both Lebanon's territory and water. What will Lebanon's future position be on this kind of talk?

[al-Harawi] First, I am aware of these intentions. Second, we are preoccupied with liberating our land from the Israeli occupier, who must depart unconditionally in implementation of a series of UN Security Council resolutions, especially Resolution 425.

[Nasrallah] And what about water?

[al-Harawi] Is Lebanon a country with great water resources? Do we have excess water like other countries that enjoy this blessing? Our water is barely enough for our land. In this regard, we have a study on our water needs in the year 2000 which almost foretells, as of today, that our water resources and our rivers will be unable to meet our own needs. Are we Turkey, which is rich with its rivers? Are we Egypt or Sudan? Moreover, let me ask you: Do people know that we have been using artesian wells for 10 years, at least, either for irrigation or for drinking water?

[Nasrallah] The use of artesian wells is the result of the failure of the state to build dams and water projects, and it may not mean that Lebanon's water resources are not enough for it.

[al-Harawi] Let us accept this statement. If we have failed to exploit our water in the necessary manner in the past 17 years, and if we haven't built dams and projects to irrigate our lands and to supply our people with water in some areas where our water has been going to waste, then does this mean that we have rivers that pass through other countries in order that we should have disagreement over them and should, consequently, conclude agreements on exploiting their waters?

[Nasrallah] Let us talk about the domestic situation. There are those who see that the broad Lebanese Government is not in full harmony and that this has slowed down government activity and work. Is this true?

[al-Harawi] I must remind [everyone] here that the Lebanese Government is not the government of one person who has gathered around him a number of politicians who agree with his opinion and who follow his line. It is a national coalition government joined by all those who have believed in and agreed to the Lebanese peace process we are pursuing currently. If there is

difference in opinions and disagreement in the government members' viewpoints, then this is something normal that is imposed by two facts:

First, the government is a national coalition government, i.e., it is a grouping of representatives of the feuding and conflicting parties and factions.

Second, Lebanon is a democratic country and it is normal that its government would encounter some sort of tug-of-war and contradiction. We must keep in mind that the Lebanese Council of Ministers has (contrary to the past) become an institution. Disagreement does occur in this institution. But this disagreement is settled in a free and democratic voting process. If one group of ministers triumphs over another, then this means that the loser accepts the majority's decision even though it does not agree with the majority. Such disagreement occurred very recently. Lebanon's participation in the Madrid conference has not gained the approval of the entire cabinet. Numerous ministers have expressed their reservations, and a number of ministers have rejected participation in the conference. However, the majority of the ministers supported this participation and were backed up by the Chamber of Deputies, which has also approved our participation in the peace conference in Madrid. We will act upon this recommendation. Naturally, I stress here that Lebanon is going to the Madrid conference only to demand Lebanon's right. It is our duty not to miss such an international opportunity to present our issue on the negotiation table. We should not sit home in Lebanon and let others determine our future. Perhaps it is necessary for me to point out here that it is Lebanon's national duty to have a full seat in any gathering or negotiations sponsored by the superpowers and the United Nations. We are going to Madrid in order not to permit anybody to eliminate Lebanon from the face of the earth or to negotiate over Lebanon's right.

[Nasrallah] So what role will you play there?

[al-Harawi] There is no doubt that there is a big difference between our Lebanese demand, namely, to implement Resolution 520 on Israel's unconditional withdrawal from our territories, and the two resolutions on which the conference is founded, namely Resolutions 242 and 338 concerning application of the theory of "land for peace." We will support the Arabs in implementing these two resolutions because we are, first, an Arab country that was a leader among the Arab League founders, and we are pained by what pains the Arabs and gladdened by what gladdens them; and second, because of the 1967 War and earlier wars, we have on our land nearly 500,000 Palestinians. Yes, we are fully concerned with the Madrid conference.

[Nasrallah] There is a lot of talk about the next Lebanese elections and there are those who say that they are coming soon. In whose interest will these elections be, and how can they be held?

[al-Harawi] In the interest of the state and of the head of state, parliamentary elections must be held in Lebanon.

It is not normal for a Chamber of Deputies to be nearly 20 years old. We are a democratic country and it is impossible that this chamber represents all the Lebanese without exception, considering how old it is. Therefore, and because of this obvious shortcoming, the regime will not procrastinate. Add to this the fact that we don't have clear records of either the number of voters or of living or dead voters. We have proposed and formed a special committee to examine the records, of which we only have microfilm photos, and to prepare these records properly so that the government can learn the true state of affairs and can re-supply these records. We will call for holding free elections so that the Lebanese people can select their representatives freely and democratically.

[Nasrallah] When?

[al-Harawi] We are preoccupied now with an international conference for peace in the Middle East, and we do not wish to view matters pessimistically. If peace is established, then free Lebanese elections must be held in all parts of Lebanon, especially in the south.

[Nasrallah] What are the factors that have delayed the reinstatement of Lebanese evacuees, keeping in mind that other provisions of the al-Ta'if Accord have been implemented before the reinstatement of evacuees, even though these provisions were to follow, not precede, this reinstatement?

[al-Harawi] There are two conditions for the reinstatement of evacuees in their native villages and towns, and their property:

First, national consensus for peace.

Second, securing the money needed for these evacuees, either to restore their destroyed or damaged homes or to provide them with new homes.

[Nasrallah] Hasn't the first condition concerning national consensus been met yet?

[al-Harawi] The major part has been met, thank God. We are now busy preparing for a complete and comprehensive national reconciliation, through which we will be able to purge the hearts and souls of what has happened and will, consequently, secure the final return of the evacuees to their homes.

[Nasrallah] Whose reconciliation with whom?

[al-Harawi] The reconciliation of all Lebanese. What has been accomplished is their agreement on peace. All that remains is for them to be reconciled.

[Nasrallah] Who?

[al-Harawi] All political leaders, spiritual leaders, parties, factions, and both clergymen and secular people.

[Nasrallah] The political opposition also?

[al-Harawi] Yes. We will invite all Lebanese factions. If the political opposition leaders who did not take part in

the war at all—such as Raymond Iddih, for whom we harbor utter respect and appreciation—wish to take part in this reconciliation, then welcome to all of them, without exception. All clergymen, all current and former ministers, deputies, parties, and opposition are invited to a complete national reconciliation.

[Nasrallah] Let us return to the evacuees. Do I understand that what prevents their return is a financial reason?

[al-Harawi] We have to have a financial fund so that we can reinstate the evacuees. Naturally, the evacuee is financially unable to restore his destroyed home or to return to his property and start from scratch. We have to have a fund to aid these evacuees.

[Nasrallah] Has this fund been established?

[al-Harawi] We are in the process of establishing this fund. Moreover, we have drafted a bill that allows the government to borrow a large sum from the Central Bank at low interest for the benefit of the evacuees, provided that the government pay the interest rate differential to the Central Bank. An evacuee can then borrow from the fund a sum of money that is divided into two parts: A part that we do not consider aid repayable by the evacuees, and a part which we consider a debt that the evacuee will repay over a long period from the revenues of his properties, agricultural crops, or work.

[Nasrallah] You have said that Syria has asked you four times to strengthen the Lebanese Army so it can withdraw from some Lebanese territories. Is the Lebanese Army prepared for this task now?

[al-Harawi] I will tell you frankly that to date, we have not asked Syria to withdraw some of its forces so that they would be replaced by the Lebanese Army. Because our army is deployed in the south, and because we lack mechanized military capabilities, we are eager to have the Syrian forces stay where they are so that we can complete the peace process together. We hope that in the near future, we will enable the Lebanese Army to acquire the necessary equipment and vehicles so that it will be able to take charge of maintaining the peace process in Lebanon.

I will be keeping no secret from you when I tell you that we took over an army that had no more than 10 percent the equipment and manpower it needed. We had no vehicles to transport the army, and we had no armor to protect our army if it had been asked to take part in a security operation. We didn't have a single helicopter. We received none of the tanks that we had purchased with our money and with credit and debts incurred by the Lebanese Government. Do you expect us to establish security when we are in this horrible condition? We are now in the process of developing our forces. By September 1992, Lebanon will have supplied its army with the necessary equipment, God willing. Everybody will then be happy for the restoration of the Lebanese Army.

[Nasrallah] We still want to learn the reasons why you will visit Italy.

[al-Harawi] We are visiting Italy to gain further trust in us and in our security and political situation. Italy is an influential, friendly country and there is no doubt that our old and new relations with Italy are capable of creating for us an international (especially European) climate, from which we will benefit domestically and externally.

As for the Vatican, it is an essential duty to visit it because Pope Paul II allows no opportunity to go by without mentioning Lebanon and helping to restore Lebanon's national unity. He also helps us financially, either by way of "Charitas" or through the Vatican's international influence.

LIBYA

Ties to U.S., U.K., Arab Neighbors Assessed

92AE0084A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic
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[Interview with Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm, coordinator of Libyan-Egyptian relations, by 'Abd-al-Latif al-Minawi in Cairo; date not given; "My Presence in Egypt Affirms That I Have No Relation to Terrorism"]

[Text] On several occasions in the past, AL-MAJALLAH has met Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm in Cairo, where he is currently acting as coordinator for Libyan-Egyptian relations. He has also carried messages from President Col. Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi to a number of Arab capitals. He declines to make any statements to the press. He is known to shun the limelight and media people, which has given him an enigmatic character. AL-MAJALLAH met with him in the UAE and later in Egypt, and held an interview with him that was not intended for publication. Rather, in these meetings Qadhdhaf-al-Damm wanted to explain Libya's position.

Recently there has been a lot of controversy over the new Libyan policy and its Arab and Western relations. That makes these discussions with the Libyan diplomat and bearer of the colonel's messages to the world very important. AL-MAJALLAH is publishing them despite his refusal.

[al-Minawi] For many years Libya was known to be a source of worry for its neighbors—Egypt, Chad, Tunisia, or Algeria—at various stages. But it is noted that Libya is now enjoying neighborly relations with its neighbors. With some parties, in fact, they are developing beyond the status of just good relations. What is the secret behind the change? Is it the new realism in Libya's foreign policy, or is it a development which you attribute to the foreign parties?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] Libya the revolution has been pursuing a straight line since 1969. And as a result of that clear policy, some problems or misunderstandings on the

part of some of the parties around us emerged—which had an impact on our relations with them. Some of the policies around us changed, but we continued our straight line. The changes that have occurred in the leaderships of these states have proved the correctness and clarity of the Libyan position. The proof of this is the fact that relations returned strong and staunch after changes in those leaderships, whether in Tunisia, Chad, Egypt, or Sudan. In my view, there has been no change in Libyan policy in the way some people have interpreted it. Libya was indicted because of a failure to understand the nature of the revolution there. Libya is a rich country with a population of 4 million and an area of 2 million square km, so there can be no talk about ambitions on its part. The state of fear of Libya is imaginary and instigated by hostile forces.

[al-Minawi] Did attempts to fuel problems or export Libya's revolutionary ideology to its neighbors lead to the tension between the two countries [not further specified]?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] The Libyan revolution started with a clear ideology. We say that no one can act on behalf of the people, and in the revolution's rules we say that we do not act for anyone in terms of changing their regime, representing them, or speaking in their name or in terms of internal policies and choices. We respect others' choice as long as they respect our choices. So this (reference in the question) is untrue.

[al-Minawi] It is clear that since Bush assumed power and Reagan left the U.S. presidency the U.S. Administration no longer levels major criticism at Libya, contrary to what used to happen in the past. And there have been reports at various times of Libyan-U.S. meetings at various levels in European or Arab capitals. What is the form of U.S.-Libyan relations at present? And what has been agreed between the two countries?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] This is further proof that Libyan policy is fixed and that the others have changed. When Reagan was replaced we heard nothing at all about any Libyan-U.S. problem. Nor did we hear threats or so-called accusations leveled at Libya, as used to happen from time to time. This is because a new administration emerged in the United States, and thus the pretexts ended with the end of the Reagan administration's era.

We have no special differences with the United States, or economic problems, or any form of relations. If we agree or disagree with it, we agree or disagree with it over Arab issues. Many states have made attempts to mediate between us and them. Most of the Arab states have tried. These contacts are continuing, and meetings also took place in the past, even with the former administration, but they did not succeed because we did not accept any tutelage or any U.S. conditions. In fact, we strongly rejected them.

[al-Minawi] What were the U.S. conditions?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] The previous administration wanted us to be either subservient or an enemy. And when we choose between slavery and enmity, we prefer to be enemies. The present administration is more logical. In fact, its political language is different. The disagreement has narrowed, and there are no longer fundamental differences. We are with the Arabs, and when the United States differs with the Arabs we become the first to differ with it.

[al-Minawi] Did you reject specific requests from the previous administration? What are the requests which you rejected?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] The previous administration perpetrated the ugliest thing that can be said about organized state terrorism against a peaceful people, to the extent that it attacked the home of brother Mu'ammār [al-Qadhdhafi] at two o'clock in the morning with 170 aircraft and tried to kill him. It also recruited some Libyan agents and tried to use them against their own country. It also tried to kill brother Mu'ammār by poison and other various means. And it tried to infiltrate mercenaries via Chad to form a "contra" force against Libya. That administration tried to recruit students in the United States and Britain, offering money as an inducement. And they tried a brainwashing process through the media and the intelligence service. But all this failed; most of these people returned to Libya and the United States failed in all its hostile activities against Libya. The latest was the fall of its agent in Chad. We refuse to be slaves. We did not allow its maneuvers to be conducted in the Gulf of Sidra, nor did we agree to its schemes against the Arabs. Nor did we allow it to interfere in our internal affairs.

[al-Minawi] Can we say that the requests included international inspection on the basis of placing some Libyan industries under control?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] We suffered a great deal from U.S. provocation. As for the present administration, we would like economic, cultural, and scientific cooperation with it. We would also like to develop some projects with it in the Jamahiriya and to create a language of logical political dialogue. And in light of what we heard from some Arab leaders, we were optimistic that this administration could do justice to the Arabs in their cause, the Palestinian cause, which is a fundamental point of disagreement between us and the United States. In fact, we have sensed that there is a big difference between the political language of the Reagan administration and that of the Bush administration.

[al-Minawi] But it was the Bush administration which endorsed the continuation of the economic embargo against Libya early this year.

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] I believe that is a routine measure. Besides, eight years of counterpropaganda in the United States have prevented the present U.S. Administration from taking a quick and positive step toward Libya. The dialogue is continuing; but we have not yet reached an

agreement whereby we can talk about or oppose this point. For our part, we are astonished at this hostile U.S. position. In fact, we see no logical justifications for the continuation of the boycott against us and the continuation of the attacks against us by some media services.

[al-Minawi] Was a U.S. promise made that the economic embargo would be ended?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] That embargo or dispute resulted from the state of hostility, and when it ends all its results end.

[al-Minawi] Will Libya stop supporting the liberation or revolutionary movements in Latin America?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] As a free country Libya supports right, justice, and just causes. And it defends the oppressed peoples. This is a question that has nothing to do with the United States. It is a people's, indeed a nation's, choice. We are Arabs and entitled to support the just causes and we also have an independent view. We Arabs are a power in the world, and we have a role. We are not sheep. We do not engage in hostile activities against the United States without any justification. The proof is that when the United States engages in activity anywhere in the world, that is its right as long as it is not hostile to us or takes no position against us. It is not necessary that we agree on all issues with it or with any other state.

[al-Minawi] Has the economic embargo imposed by the United States affected Libya considerably?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] They think so, but the opposite is true: We have benefited a lot from the U.S. embargo, as we have relied on ourselves. The oil in Libya is now for the Libyans alone. They thought after their departure that Libya would be finished. On the contrary, oil projects have doubled with purely Libyan management, Libyan companies, Libyan technicians, Libyan young men, and Libyan experts. The boycott imposed on us has spared us some of the worthless commodities which, regrettably, used to be imported to Libya and some parts of the Arab world. So we have saved our money spent on trivia from the West. The boycott gave the Libyans the spirit of challenge, so they turned to production, agriculture, and self-reliance. It has benefited us much. In fact, we thank God for the boycott.

[al-Minawi] Some people interpret the change in Libya's policy with respect to your foreign relations and with the United States as due to the 1986 [air] strike having succeeded in knocking some sense or reason into the present Libyan leadership in its foreign relations.

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] We do not claim to be stronger than America. Rather, we are aware of our capabilities and make our own calculations. We are capable of defending our land. At the time we faced the challenge all Libyan men and women carried arms. Libya can mobilize about one million soldiers capable of carrying arms at any moment. Therefore, we are confident that

invading Libya with military forces is something impossible. As for air strikes, once a strike takes place its over. An air strike or even one hundred strikes cannot intimidate us. This is the logic of dealing with a revolution. The proof is the fact that, until his last day in the administration, Reagan was concentrating fleets on our borders. This was happening several years after 1986. With regard to the present administration, its logic is different. Therefore, we do not make enemies for the sake of enmity. We are a people who suffered from wars and tragedies and we call for peace and turning the Mediterranean into a lake of peace. We also call for cooperation between the world peoples and devoting resources to development. The billions that are spent on missiles should be spent on development. We have spent billions on the man-made river. This proves our love for peace. This is our nature and this is what we are. But the claim that we are afraid of threats is something that's naturally unacceptable to the Arab. [passage omitted]

[al-Minawi] What about Libyan relations with Western Europe, specifically relations between Libya and Britain, as it has been reported that meetings between Libyan and British officials have taken place in various areas of the world? Did you reach a new formula for Libyan-British relations at these meetings?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] After Thatcher's departure from the cabinet—as she was Reagan's ally and maintained a strong relationship with him—and the arrival of a new prime minister, namely Major, matters became much better. Britain has several thousand workers and engineers working in Libya. And its companies and economic interests are present in Libya. Britain has great experience and will deal realistically with the Jamahiriyah. We welcome this realistic position and we have no problem with the British people. All the problems fabricated are not based on any logic.

[al-Minawi] Do you expect a diplomatic exchange between Libya and Britain?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] We now have officers and Libyan employees in Britain. And there are British employees in Libya. And I believe that that will develop within a short period into diplomatic representation. For our part, we have no objection to the establishment of a normal relationship with Britain, and, in my view, they too have no objection. The contacts are continuing, even after the recent storm after which brother Mu'ammar replied to them. They tried to harm Libya's pride and we strongly told them: We will regard Britain as nonexistent on the map, and we do not need a relationship with Britain. But if they want a relationship with us, we welcome that. Certainly they have no interest in being hostile to us, nor do we have any interest in being hostile to them.

[al-Minawi] How do you view your present relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] Relations with Saudi Arabia and all the Gulf states—without exception—are good. Consultations between us are ongoing. The Gulf countries'

broad participation in Libya's celebration marking the completion of the first stage of the great man-made river is evidence of the development in those relations. We are trying to further develop our Arab relations and we will maintain them even when there are differences over certain issues and views because, in the final analysis, the enemy does not differentiate between the Libyan, the Saudi, the Egyptian, or the Syrian. We all are in the same boat and we have no choice but to agree with each other. We are optimistic about the future. We are not the first nation to suffer a setback and to reach this level. Germany was destroyed but it rose once again. Japan was hit with nuclear bombs, but it has become economically stronger than the power that struck it.

[al-Minawi] How do you evaluate the progress of the Arab Maghreb Union? Was Libya's absence from the recent summit an indication of waning enthusiasm for this union?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] On the contrary, the Arab Maghreb Union is progressing vigorously and Libya has an important role to play in Arab Maghreb unity.

[al-Minawi] In the people's minds, your name remains associated with the terrorist operations against Egypt. You are credited with participating in and planning many of them. In the new era, your name now is associated with relations between the two countries and with having exerted great efforts in Egyptian-Libyan relations. How did you manage to do this?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] With regard to associating my name with terrorism, the fact that I am here refutes the first charge, because it is unfounded. Libya was rumored to be a terrorist state by some of the sick powers that were trying to drive a wedge between it and Egypt and to conspire against Egypt and the Egyptians. They succeeded for some time, but the truth soon surfaced, and now there can be no way for driving a wedge between us. With regard to my activities, I am simply a soldier in this mission; it is a humble role which many Egyptians and Libyans share with me. But the truth is that the role is for President Husni Mubarak. He is a candid man, honest, frank, and true to himself and to us. When brother Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi met him, he was very impressed by him and found him to be a person very close to him. Therefore, they cannot differ.

[al-Minawi] Did you meet al-Sadat when he was president of Egypt?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] I met with President al-Sadat several times and I was very frank with him. Other people convinced him that Libya was going to attack the High Dam and was conspiring against Egypt. Unfortunately, the other forces succeeded in exploiting the conditions then and undermining all attempts with al-Sadat.

[al-Minawi] Do you recall the last meeting with late President Anwar al-Sadat?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] That was in Paris during his last visit to France in 1981. We were very frank and very clear with him. We always called for distinguishing between political differences and peoples' interests. Our differences with al-Sadat were about the political stand. Also the fact that President Reagan was in office prevented any rapprochement with Egypt then. His objective was to blockade Libya.

[al-Minawi] Do you believe that your contact with al-Sadat was useful during the tense period?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] It was useful in order to clarify our views and to undermine the U.S. program in Egypt. It was suggested to al-Sadat that Libya was going to attack, that it has missiles [aimed] against the High Dam, and that it was going to drop bombs. We were constantly making it clear that such allegations were not true.

[al-Minawi] Do you believe that, at a certain stage, Libya made a mistake in its behavior toward al-Sadat?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] I do not think so. There was a conspiracy against Libya and Egypt. We both were the victims of al-Sadat era. [passage omitted]

[al-Minawi] Some people's interpretation of Libya's improvement of its relations with Egypt in the recent stage is that Libya turned in that direction on the grounds that Cairo was the last door able to rescue the Libyan regime from internal dangers it might face and because of its full awareness of the Libyan people's satisfaction with strong relations with Egypt. What is your comment?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] Libya has no government to make it fear the people. Libya is governed by the masses, and it is the masses who decide. The people in Libya are the ones who decide foreign policy. And people's Libya opened its borders with Egypt even before the meeting with President Husni Mubarak.

[al-Minawi] There is another interpretation of relations with Egypt, namely that it is a desire on your part to open a door to relations with the Western states and the United States, and that Egypt was that door. Was that the aim or the outcome?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] I do not forget. Our relations with the West are relations of interests. They exploit oil and we exploit some science; that is the basis of our relations, and we can develop them or sever them. As for our relations with Egypt, they are not at all subject to conditions from European or other states. On the contrary, in my view, if Libyan-Egyptian relations were not excellent, the United States would have restored its relations with us immediately.

[al-Minawi] How does Libya benefit from its unionist relations with Egypt?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] In Libya there is a regime that is willing to place all its capabilities at Egypt's disposal. We do not measure the benefit or the lack of it. As a

revolution we want to restore this nation's pride, and here the sacrifices are of little importance. We want to correct this reversed situation. The Germans provided 40 billions [unit not specified] to East Germany. We call on the Arab states to use this logic. It might look like a material loss in the short term, but in the longer term we gain in terms of their unification. Nevertheless, we benefit from relations with Egypt.

[al-Minawi] The abolition of borders with Egypt was announced [by Libya] in March. Egypt announced the abolition of borders with Libya in July. The Egyptian announcement coincided with the efforts to convene a peace conference. Some saw the Egyptian move as the price of neutralizing Libya's position on the peace conference.

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] Many people interpreted it as a move to contain Libya. Others say that Egypt needs employment for the workers who left Kuwait. All these are superficial criteria. However, if that was the case, we would welcome it because that is a positive aspect and we would welcome Egyptian assistance just as we are willing to help Egypt at any time, even if that was interpreted by some as deception, plotting, or some way of avoiding taking a stand. The masses want that and it is in their interest. Incidentally, our position is quite clear. We demand the Palestine of 1948 for which royalist Egypt fought.

[al-Minawi] We hear of a great development in Libyan-Egyptian relations, but the question is always about results. For example, the question of settling Egyptian peasants [in Libya]. A year has now passed but we have only heard about the settlement of 100 families. What is the fate of that plan, and why has it been paralyzed for so long?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] It has not been paralyzed. It is being carefully studied, and special programs are being drawn up. We have carried out a complete study of the matter. We just want to proceed carefully and according to studies in order to achieve positive results.

[al-Minawi] Did you study the Egyptian experiment in Iraq?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] Certainly, but there is a difference in circumstances. We are an extension of one another and direct means of communications between us are available. We have studied many similar situations in different places. The Egyptian brothers are taking part in these studies.

[al-Minawi] Will the one million Egyptian fellahin be located in the newly reclaimed area around the man-made river?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] Some of them will be there.

[al-Minawi] When, in your opinion, will the one million Egyptian be settled?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] The committee [commissioned to study Egyptian settlement] has conducted many studies. For instance, it would take 100 families, and then another 100 families, until new communities and towns are created in the area.

[al-Minawi] Are you not afraid that a major Egyptian presence in the new community will have certain social and political impacts?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] We accept this because the revolution does not say this is an Egyptian and that is a Libyan. Rather, we say this is an Arab.

[al-Minawi] Even if this may lead to changing the nature of the existing regime?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] The existing regime is a popular regime and a Jamahiriya. We welcome the joining of the Egyptian people and the masses of the Libyan people, politically or economically.

[al-Minawi] One of the problems that seems simple, but that has an impact on some people and is a source of vexation to them is the question of money due to Egyptians workers in Libya. This money is estimated at \$6 million. In terms of transactions between states, it is a paltry sum. So far, this amount has not yet been paid in full, as was reported. About \$4 million was remitted, and there is still a balance of \$2 million. Do you not think that this will adversely affect Libya's image among the Egyptian people and Egyptian workers?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] This is an old story. When problems between Libya and Egypt were acute, and after much talk in the media about the expulsion of Egyptians without any justification, this amount proves that what was said in the past was wrong. If the compensations amount to \$6 million, it is an insignificant amount compared with the thousands of Egyptian workers in Libya. But when arbitration was held, the Federation of Egyptian Workers responded to complaints by some Egyptian workers, and an agreement was reached with us on \$6 million, which was remitted to the Federation of Egyptian Workers.

[al-Minawi] What about reports that talk of postponement and of fixing a new date for payment of the \$4 million?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] What is being published is the responsibility of the others. We are talking about what happened. This file has been closed.

[al-Minawi] What about the Libyan-Egyptian borders? Libya is now open to all Egyptians without restrictions, which has led to large numbers of Egyptian workers wanting to go there to work. Are you aware of the magnitude of the social and political dangers that could result from the presence of a large number of unemployed workers?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] First, there will be a rush of Libyans coming to Egypt and Egyptians going to Libya.

After the agreements between Libya and Egypt, which the Egyptian People's Assembly and the Peoples' Committees in Libya endorsed, were signed, people from both countries marched toward one another's country. It has now become the right of any Libyan citizen to reside in and own property in Egypt. The same thing applies to the Egyptians in Libya. We are not worried about this temporary upsurge. The situation is being watched in a scientific, calm, and organized manner. The workers who go to Libya will create new job opportunities in virgin areas and lands. The Libyan market will absorb many of them, particularly since we have a program to dispense with foreign workers and bring Arab workers in their place. This is how we should be in thick and thin. When the Libyans suffered from poverty and hunger under Italian colonialism, they came to Egypt, which took them in. Because there is a large number of job opportunities and because it has various resources, Libya should open its doors to Egypt and the Egyptian people so that they may reside and live in it.

[al-Minawi] If there are no real job opportunities for these workers, what is the use of opening the door for them if they will go there without a specific objective?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] When a worker from Qina goes to Alexandria to look for a job, this becomes a kind of movement. It is the same when he comes to Benghazi or Tripoli. We certainly are planning with the Egyptian brothers to open new job opportunities both in Libya and Egypt, whether through investment companies or through building new communities. This is a common problem that we are working together to solve.

[al-Minawi] If Libya believes Egypt and Libya to be one country and if it strongly and urgently wants unity between the two countries, why does it not announce that it would shoulder a part of Egypt's debts to ease Egypt's economic burden and try to increase the scope for more options for Egyptian policymakers?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] I believe that if there was such an Egyptian suggestion the Libyan people's congresses would not hesitate, in the event of a complete merger, to shoulder the responsibility for these burdens. We were prodded by the attitude of West Germany which sacrificed billions to ease the suffering of East Germany. We call for a merger that would unify all Libyan and Egyptian resources.

[al-Minawi] The voice of the Libyan opposition in Egypt was the loudest on this. But this opposition voice is now quite silent. Was this due to an agreement with the opposition, or is it due to the opposition's feeling that it is of no use to continue to operate in Egypt, and therefore has moved its activities abroad? Or is it an agreement among parties, including Egypt, to silence any Libyan opposition voice in Egypt?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] There is no presidential rule in Libya to have an opposition to. In Libya, there are People's Conferences. The people rule and, therefore, there is no traditional regime. The opposition is inside

the people's conferences. The people disagree and agree with total freedom on all issues of the country. Whatever [opposition] there was, whether in Egypt or in certain countries, unfortunately, they were tools that have been exploited by intelligence services of other countries that sometimes succeeded in recruiting certain persons to join the enemies' ranks. When relations between us and any other country are restored, these elements disappear as if by magic, because they were part of an intelligence operation. Their role has come to an end. On the other hand, the media has significantly contributed to distorting Libya's image among the Arab Libyan citizens who live in Egypt, Britain, or the United States. When the media campaigns faded, those citizens were able to distinguish between right and wrong, and many Libyans have returned to Libya, for this is their country, and it is their right to agree or disagree. Many Libyans were victims of foreign conspiracies. In the final analysis, they are our people, no matter what have they done. We respect whoever disagrees with us, provided that he is not manipulated by foreign powers, which is a sad thing. They are also the victims of conspiracies against Libya and we must help them.

[al-Minawi] There have long been reports of coup attempts in Libya. When was the last coup attempt against Colonel al-Qadhafi?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] We hear about these coup attempts from the foreign media. We have heard a lot about coup attempts and assassination attempts, but the truth is quite different. How could there be a coup against the people?

[al-Minawi] What about Egyptian-Sudanese relations and Libya being a third party to them? What is the role Libya is playing between Egypt and Sudan?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] We believe that the Egyptians and the Sudanese are brothers close to Libya. We believe that the establishment of a state is possible. We believe that a triangle such as this could be a basis for the establishment of a powerful Arab state, since what the Sudanese lack is found in Libya, and vice versa. We three complement one another, and we can establish a state to be reckoned with in this age. Therefore, we care about Egyptian-Sudanese relations the same way we care about Egyptian-Libyan relations. Our brothers in Egypt understand this quite well. Tension in Egyptian-Sudanese relations has almost disappeared completely. We will, in the near future, begin a new stage of Egyptian-Sudanese cooperation with Libya alongside it.

[al-Minawi] Has Libya, within the context of its dealings with the existing regime in Sudan, contributed to convincing Egypt to differentiate between the Revolution Command Council for National Salvation and the National Islamic Front?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] We must respect other people's choices. Neither the Egyptian brothers have asked us, nor did we ask Sudan to choose a particular political

regime. We accept the choices of the Sudanese people and recognize their right to choose their regime. Egypt also recognizes this.

[al-Minawi] There have been interpretations or speculations about an Egyptian-Libyan attempt to separate al-Bashir's regime from the National Islamic Front, which is considered to be the foundation depended upon in Sudan. How would you explain this claim?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] I believe that this is a kind of intrigue. As I said, we do not interfere in Sudanese affairs and the Sudanese people's choices. Nor does Egypt interfere. They have total freedom to choose whatever suits them.

[al-Minawi] When you were in Cairo you must have heard about the apparent Egyptian moral support for the Sudanese opposition. Will that continue or will it stop?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] I have no knowledge of Egyptian support for the Sudanese opposition.

[al-Minawi] Not even of the presence of that opposition inside Egypt?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] I believe that Egypt is a refuge for all stray Arabs.

[al-Minawi] Do you believe that the enormous Sudanese opposition abroad reflects partisan interests of its own, or expresses the people's feelings? With which legitimate body do you in Libya deal? Is it with the existing legitimate body?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] It is the logic of the age.

[al-Minawi] Is this a new realism in Libya's policy?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] Yes, when it is applied to all peoples.

[al-Minawi] By nature, the Libyans are inclined to trade. So far, the revolution has failed to turn them into an industrial-agricultural people. At the same time, there are obstacles inherent in the regime that prevent them from engaging in business in a free manner. How will this problem be dealt with in the future?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] Everything is permitted in Libya as long as it does not exploit others. Business deals in the sense of exploiting the other people's need are banned. But there are no restrictions on exercising a useful activity.

[al-Minawi] Libya is a member of the Arab Maghreb Union and, at the same time, has excellent relations with Egypt and Sudan. Do you believe that the situation will one day allow Libya to become the liaison between these two states and their joining the Arab Maghreb countries?

[Qadhaf-al-Damm] When we say that we have excellent relations with Egypt, this does not detract from Libyan-Maghreb relations. Libya is linked to Tunisia by open borders, and also to Algeria. Likewise, there are

links of close cooperation. And there is harmony on the same level between the Libyan, Tunisian, and Algerian leaderships. Libya is a bridge linking the Arab brothers together. It is playing an effective role in the Arab nation's unity, which is a positive and important factor. The role Libya is playing joins the Arab nation's wings. This role has been very effective in lessening the impact of Arab disunity during the Gulf war. Libya has good ties and there is continuous consultation between the leader of the revolution [al-Qadhdhafi] and the Gulf leaders. Libya has proposed the Arab union plan, which, in effect, is a Noah's Ark to save this nation from the flood.

[Boxed item 1: Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm Succeeded in Politics but Failed in Marrying al-Sadat's Daughter:

Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm is one of the principal figures implementing the Libyan leader's policy of presenting Libya's new image.

Qadhdhaf-al-Damm is basically an army officer, and is related to Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, although he has always stressed that this means nothing in Libya.

Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm was in the Air Force and the Special Forces. He was one of the Libyan officers who took part in the 1973 war, on the Egyptian front.

In 1979, Qadhdhaf-al-Damm began operating abroad in the field of international relations. He was able to establish a major and influential network of relations in many Arab and European countries and in the United States involving political and economic leaders influential in decision-making in their own countries. Qadhdhaf-al-Damm believes that what he is doing is presenting Libya's real image, and not that which is portrayed by the media. He believes that Libya needs to remove the confusion and misunderstanding through which it is seen abroad. This is his basis for explaining and conveying Libya's real image, in which he believes.

Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm was believed to be associated with the Libyan intelligence organ and to be its chief. He strongly denies such allegations to those around him, saying that it is an attempt to distort his image before the international community because of displeasure with his activities or relations. He asserts that he never worked with the intelligence organ, despite the fact that such work is something normal in all the world. If such an allegation was true, he would not have been able to tour the world so easily and without hindrance.

Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm acts in coordination with the Libyan leadership. He has always sought to improve Libya's relations with the Western countries and the United States. AL-MAJALLAH has learned that his efforts with the United States date back to the era of president Reagan. He actually visited the United States, but was unable to reach agreement with the previous administration.

Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Damm's story with Egypt is a long one. Parts of it are known and other parts are still a secret. He was born in an Egyptian village in al-Jizah Governorate after the Italians expelled his father from Libya. He had strong ties with Egypt and the Egyptians, as well as with President al-Sadat. Sometime in the early seventies, things culminated into a proposed engagement with Jihan, Anwar al-Sadat's young daughter. In fact, certain steps were taken along this path. But apparently subsequent political developments prevented going ahead with it.

Qadhdhaf-al-Damm's name has been associated with violence, terror, and sabotage operations in Egypt throughout the period of alienation and tense relations. Strangely, at the same time, his name continued to be mentioned as a mediator during this period. He used to be described as Col. al-Qadhdhafi's personal envoy.

Qadhdhaf-al-Damm also took part in normalizing Libyan-Gulf relations and Libyan-Saudi relations.

[Boxed item 2: The Gulf Tour]

[By 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sadiqi and Taj-al-Din 'Abd-al-Haq in Abu Dhabi]

[al-Minawi] What are the objectives of your current tour?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] This is a tour of consultation concerning current developments and changes after the Gulf war. I am carrying messages from the leader of the Libyan revolution to the leaders of the countries of the region. These messages deal with Arab security. The Jamahiriya's views on this matter are that Arab unity is the impregnable bastion confronting foreign designs, and even in dealing with border and personal conflicts. If we are talking about emotions, interests, future, destiny, national objectives, economy, or anything else, the situation calls upon the Arabs to become one entity. Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi has come forth with the Arab union project. This project preserves for every Arab entity its independence, whether it is an emirate, a kingdom, a republic, or a jamahiriya. It also preserves the character of each regime, but links them all together in a federation headed by the kings and presidents in rotation. It will have two councils—ministerial and parliamentary. It will lay down strategic projects, such as wheat projects and major industrial projects in the field of gas and electricity. The objective is to mobilize the nation's tremendous resources for the benefit of the Arabs in order to boost their self-confidence and serve their strategic interests. Such unity is in harmony with the current world development toward the establishment of major entities. We find that such entities include nuclear powers in Europe that are uniting, despite the past conflicts and wars in which millions have fallen. But today they are becoming allies, and are establishing a single state in which people can move freely.

[Al-Sadiqi] Can we understand from this that your tour is a tour of mediation in order to clear the air between the Arab countries?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] No, it is a tour for consultation and exchange of views on all matters of interest for the Arab nation's future.

[Al-Sadiqi] Do you believe that there is a chance for the proposed union project in light of the outcome of the Gulf war?

[Qadhdhaf-al-Damm] The Gulf war should give a push to this demand because the economic, political, and social decline that we are experiencing today is due to a topsy-turvy situation resulting from the lack of some sort of an Arab bloc to face the future.

MAURITANIA

Background on Evolving Political Parties Detailed

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10, 13 Sep 91

[A two-part article by Qasi Salih al-Darwish: "Mauritania Vis-a-vis Democracy; Party Plans Founded on Tribalism, Businessmen Who Aspire To Play Political Role; Traditional Forces, Clergymen Will Not Stand Against Regime; President's Party Polarizes Most of Them; Mauritanian Intellectuals Divided Between President's Party, Party of Chief of President's Tribe; Mauritanian Intellectuals Opposed to Tribalism, Not to Tribe; Projected Parties Are Not Ideological, Are Founded on Quicksand; With Collapse of Ideologies, Mauritanian Ideological Tendencies Are Ailing; Communists Opposed to Arab Identity; Presidential Party Strips Ideological Parties of Their Cadres; Mauritanian Society's Islamic Character, Tribalism Obstruct Large-Scale Fundamentalism Proliferation

[10 Sep p 6]

[Text] The Rassemblement Pour La Democratie [RDU] has entered history in its capacity as the first political party outside the regime to acquire a license to engage in political action within the context of party pluralism since Mauritania's independence. This party was founded by Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba, a moderate, independent national figure who is a most prominent member of the first generation of Mauritanian intellectuals. He developed an excellent reputation when he was minister of education in the administration of President Mokhtar Ould Daddah. He is the mayor of Atar and chairman of the board of more than one business firm and establishment, including the Mauritanian al-Barakah Bank. Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba enjoys respect in various circles and is well-known for his moral courage. He has been the first independent national figure to be invited to comment on and to discuss the new constitution on television.

Despite these qualities, which permit him to be the first to consider forming and proclaiming an independent party, his announcement created amazement and questions among many people, and is still raising questions

which are turning into riddles, because those who ask them cannot provide reassuring answers to these questions.

This distinction is due to the fact that Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba is the mayor of Atar, the president's home town. He is also the head of the Smassid tribe, a rich tribe that is influential in commerce and business. It is also the president's tribe. According to all sources, the relations between Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba and President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya are excellent and dominated by mutual respect and friendship. The two men have not been known to have any evident dispute or any differences in any position or on any issue.

This is why the easiest interpretation offered by some political circles regarding Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba's formation of a party other than the president's party is that the former party has been formed on agreement with the president so that Ould Taya can be present in both the ruling party and the party that is independent of the regime, and so that this party can work for the president, even if it chooses to oppose his policy on this or that point.

But reliable sources have noted that some members of the president's family have expressed their regret and some criticism of Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba's initiative, which could confuse some people and could divide the forces that are supposed to support Ould Taya's regime.

Simultaneously, informed and neutral sources reaffirm that they are confident that Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba's initiative is independent and that he truly wants to establish an independent party that is not necessarily opposed to the regime, but that allows itself a margin of disagreement with the ruling party on this or that policy point.

The confusion and questions enveloping the reasons for the creation of this party, the party's true objectives, and the nature of the party's connection with President Ould Taya's plan have not stopped numerous intellectuals from moving to rally behind Atar's mayor (who is also chairman of the League of Mauritania's Mayors), including university professors and top state cadres. Moreover, numerous traditional notables and tribal chieftains supported this initiative at the outset, but then backed down when they learned that Baba was going to establish a special party for the president and the regime.

Contrary to what some people might think, those who joined the RDS belong to the various Arab and African ethnic groups, tribes, and regions. In addition to Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba, the party leader, this party includes among its prominent figures Said Ould Hamdi, an ex-Mauritanian UN ambassador, and Bamba Ould [Yezid] who was a minister in Mokhtar Ould Daddah's administration and a leader of al-Nahdah [Renaissance] Party before independence. In the latest municipal elections, Bamba Ould Yezid emerged as a moderate opposition

leader through the party list he formed, but which did not take part in the elections because it was rejected by the Interior Ministry.

This party has been characterized as a right-of-center, socially-conservative party. But it is premature to judge the party's political tendency and its relationship with and positions on the modernizing and contemporary tendencies that may be projected by other parties, including the president's party, i.e. the Social Democratic Republican Party [PRDS]. It is also premature to talk about the nature of the party's future relationship with the regime, which could be a relationship of dialogue and critical support, perhaps even of alliance. But it will certainly not be a relationship of subservience. This party's future is also tied to the future of the president's party and the degree of its success. If the president's party is dynamic and can develop a mechanism of mass polarization in youth circles capable of countering the other parties' strong points and its own weak points, then it will lessen the possibilities for the RDU party's proliferation and entrenchment. But if the president's party grows flabby from inflation, if it develops clique conflicts, and if it turns into a vast bureaucratic reservoir for opportunism, then the RDU party will attract the elements enthusiastic for Ould Taya's regime but unable to deal with the ruling party.

The Independent Party's platform is what attracts the attention of the Mauritanian political scene. It is expected that this party will be registered at the Interior Ministry any day now. This party is being founded by the supporters of ex-President Mokhtar Ould Daddah, who lives in exile now, moving between the French city of Nice and Tunisia. Preparations for this party were made by two ex-defense ministers in Ould Daddah's administration, namely Mohamed Ould Baba, who also served as minister of education and was well-known for his defense of the Arabic language and his ardent demand for Arabicizing education, and Dr. Abdallah Ould Bah, along with a third minister in Ould Daddah's administration, namely Moulay Mohamed. This platform attracts primarily the citizens of Trarza Region and Hodh El Gharbi Region. The leaders deny that their party is based on nostalgia for Ould Daddah's regime and on advocating this regime. These leaders say that they are prepared to support President Ould Taya. Even if the idea of nostalgia for Ould Daddah's regime is based on and mixed with a regional and tribal tendency, and if it reflects tribal interests that believe that they have been done an injustice since President Ould Daddah's regime was toppled, it is difficult to imagine that this party's objective is to endeavor to return Ould Daddah to the presidency.

There is nothing to indicate that Ould Daddah has a personal relationship with this party's platform, even though he is certainly familiar with its concept and with some of its details because of his personal relations with the platform authors. It is worth noting that Ould Daddah has maintained silence since he was ousted by a

military coup in 1978. Everybody, including the presidency, speaks of him with respect now. But this does not mean that Ould Daddah has a real chance to regain power. Neither the authority's power relations, nor the tribal power relations, nor the political power relations permit one to imagine such a return, especially since the regime is enjoying unprecedented political and security stability and since the signs of the early beginnings of the democratic experiment do not indicate that Mauritania will face chaos and trouble. If such a condition existed because of the international and regional circumstances, it could make Ould Daddah a figure to resort to in the future, but this is more of a fantasy than an idea emanating from an objective reading of the real situation.

According to some informed sources, this platform's authors have proposed developing an understanding to form a single party to Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba. But Baba turned down the proposal after a long discussion. He said, "We know each other well and we are in agreement on what we have discussed. But we disagree on what we have not discussed. The position of this party of the Trarza may be similar to the RDU's position on the regime—i.e., it may not automatically consider itself an opposition party—may support a given policy or official position and may oppose other aspects and positions. Moreover, there is nothing to prevent this party from allying itself with the president's party and participating in the government, or allying itself with Ahmed Ould Sidi Baba to form a single front in the elections.

There is a draft plan for a third independent party, whose supporters are Francophile modern intellectuals. It consists of a group of cadres and university academicians. The party's initiative has come from Ghali Ould Abdelhamid, chairman of the Mauritanian Human Rights Committee. It includes, in particular, a group of lawyers and some members of the PKM [Parti des Kadihines de Mauritanie], known as the National Democratic Movement [MND], who broke away from the organization without abandoning the intellectual thinking of the MND currency. They are close to the non-Maur black tendencies. These people include Moussa Fal.

This party will try to play the role of the so-called "civilian society" in Europe and in some Arab Maghreb capitals. The party's problem is that it is difficult to speak about a neutral civilian society detached from politics in Mauritania. The majority of Mauritanian intellectuals are politicized and belong, organizationally and emotionally, to existing ideological tendencies. The others belong to the technocrats, and their interests lie with state institutions, i.e., with the regime, whereas their emotions are divided between tribal and regional affiliations and personal ties.

Even in the Human Rights League, other political movements such as the Ba'thists and the Nasirists, have a strong presence, considering that they have, until recently, been the most prominent victims of political

detention and punishment and, consequently, a main concern of the Human Rights League.

This is why the place that will be taken by the Ghali group will be somewhere between MND and the non-Maure blacktendencies, on the one hand, and the Arab democratic and liberal tendencies, on the other. But it may be closer to the non-Maure black tendencies and the Francophile cultural expressions. This will curtail the group's proliferation in Arab youth circles and traditional tribal circles. Its main importance could be in the area of information, through its relationship with the independent media, especially with Western and French media.

In recent months, a political alliance has emerged in the Mauritanian arena under the name of the Unified Democratic Front [UDF]. Its founders had been jailed a few weeks before [the announcement of] the draft constitution and were then released under a general amnesty. This front's members had issued a stern radical statement against the regime demanding democracy and the holding of a conference of all Mauritanian ethnic components, i.e., a conference similar to the conferences held in a number of African countries. They also demanded the creation of an independent committee to investigate torture, killings, and violations to which some black political detainees were subjected.

Even though this investigation committee has almost become the general demand of the majority of the political forces and well-known figures, regardless of their political color, ideological horizons, and tribal belongings, the front was harmed by putting the [demand] statement in a comprehensive political framework at a time when Mauritanian Arabs were complaining of the French media's pressure, and when their old fears about national unity and the national identity were being revived. This put the front in with the French-supported radical non-Maure black tendencies.

The presence of radical anti-Arab elements in the front is what caused this accusation, keeping in mind that, as a political alliance, the front has primarily sought to coordinate the statement signatories' interests to prove their presence in the arena before the actual application of the democratic experiment.

The most prominent front members signing the statement were: Hadrami Ould Khattry, a well-known figure from the Idao Ali tribe. He was minister from 1961-1962. He is well-respected in the tribe and his family has moral religious influence that surpasses the limits of the tribe. His grandfather, Sidi Abdallah Ould Haji Ibrahim, was a prominent ulema. Despite the great respect he and his family enjoy, he does not belong to the tribe's main clan. This is why his political influence within the tribe is limited. Also, the fact that the tribe is big and spread all over Mauritania encourages the rise of conflicting personal political ambitions within the tribe.

Hadrami Ould Khattry's signing of the statement alongside radical elements that are known for their hostility to

Mauritania's Arab identity had harmed him greatly in the tribe and among its youth. But his incarceration and the general movement to form parties with a tribal dimension have restored his role and have even turned him into a hero in the eyes of some of his tribe members.

The front statement was also signed by ex-Rural Development Minister Messaoud Boulkheir who belongs to the harratine faction (liberated slaves). He was a leader of El Hor, which we will discuss later. He rose to the fore as an important political figure in the latest municipal elections. In those elections, his party list showed very encouraging results, taking advantage of objective circumstances and of numerous unexpected complications, including disagreement among the Nasirists, the refusal to permit two important party lists to run in the elections, the turning of a vote for this list into a means to express opposition to the regime, and failure to reach agreement with the regime on how to manage the elections.

Signatories of the statement also include Traore Ladjji who represents the labor union tendency in the MND. He is an African from the Soninke ethnic group. The signatories also include Moustapha Ould Badreddine, the historical leader of the communist wing of the PKM. He is from Brakna Region and from a Zawaya tribe. He has been educated in Arabic. When arrested, he held the position of principal of the Training School. They further included a black ex-minister during Ould Daddah's administration, named Diop.

There are also two young men from the student movement. The first is Bechir Ould Hasan, the son of Moulay Ould Hasan who is one of Mauritania's most prominent businessmen. He also was an ex-UN ambassador. He is characterized as a sedate man who enjoys the respect of all. His son also figured prominently in the student strike that was staged two years ago. The father has joined the president's party.

The other one is Ould Yessa. His father is the minister of state audits. This is the first time that a minister's son was arrested for a political reason. The father continues to be a minister. They come from the family of Tagant princes, i.e., from a warrior tribe Saif.

It is difficult for these people to remain in the same party and for the front to turn into a party because of the difference in their tendencies, which borders on contradiction, and because the base on which their interests meet is very fragile. The regime can torpedo it easily at any time. This is why it is not unlikely that this front will produce several parties, not a single party. These parties may or may not form an alliance under certain circumstances, such as elections.

Another projected plan for an independent party is the plan for the party of Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Oumah, who has a doctorate in economics and who is in the pan-Arabist tendency close to the Ba'th Party. He is one of the few in this tendency who had relations with the Syrian Ba'th Party. In 1986, he won the municipal

elections to become the first mayor of Nouakchott, the capital. However, his party list did not gain a majority in the municipal council.

The bounds of this party, if it is actually formed, will be the bounds of the personality of Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Oumah, who some intellectuals consider a party by himself.

A careful review of these party platforms may lead to an important fact concerning Mauritanian political life under the umbrella of pluralism, namely that these platforms ignore ideology and ideological starting points completely. The prevalent characteristic in these platforms is that they are platforms for grouping parties. It is no coincidence that the first party to obtain a license to operate carries the name of "grouping." This name, along with "front," are likely to be the recurrent or predominant names. If a "grouping" has greater capacity to absorb the tribal reality, then a "front" has historical ideological meanings in the Arab political legacy.

Thus, the projected party platforms are plans for parties that are pluralistic in their fundamental structure. This contradicts, of course, the ideological starting points, which dictate a large degree of ideological harmony. This summary reflects ideology's relative retreat from the arena, either because of the ideological tendencies' development and because of their accumulated problems and contradictions; or because of the nature of the ruling regime in the administration of President Maaouya Ould Taya, who shuffled the cards when he combined in his policy various elements demanded by conflicting political tendencies.

The third, and perhaps the most important, reason for this retreat is the revival of conventional institutions with completely unexpected force. The conventional institutions in Mauritania are:

1. Tribal leaders and affiliations: When one Mauritanian meets another Mauritanian he doesn't know, he asks him about his tribe, simply and without embarrassment. When the talk concerns any figure, notable, or official, reference is made spontaneously to his tribe. Mauritania's social fabric is a well-knit and interwoven tribal fabric, regardless of whether it is the white society or the society of the African minorities, which are divided into ethnic groups and tribes.

Emigration to the cities and the growth of the cities, especially Nouakchott, weakened the tribal manifestations through modern life. Since independence, the political regime has dealt with the tribal phenomenon in a complex and contradictory fashion. On the one hand, the top position in the political regime has not reflected tribal power relations or tribal alliances, and it has not been confined to one tribe or one region. Former President Mokhtar Ould Daddah is from the Zawaya tribe in Trarza (Oulad Aberi). President Moustapha Ould Salek, who succeeded Daddah, was from the Jaafra tribe, a small and insignificant warrior Hassania tribe living between Hodh El Gharbi and Assaba. President

Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla is from a very small tribe in Nouadhibou that lives mainly in the desert. President Maaouya Ould Taya is from the Zawaya tribe, a part of the Smassid tribe. Unlike some other tribes, the Zawaya tribe is not a big tribe spread over all parts of Mauritania. But it has been well-known historically for its commerce and its wealth. This is why it has been one of the economically-influential tribes, even before Ould Taya assumed power.

As the only exception, President Ould Daddah assumed power as a result of varied objective factors, including his role as a link with the French when he worked as a translator during the colonialist era, as well as the fact that he was educated in France and married a French woman. Ould Daddah's tribe got a big share of the administration at the time because it was the tribe which had the most extensive contact with the French and, consequently, the tribe with the best command of French at a time when the administration was completely Francophone. Moreover, the other tribes were not prepared to present their sons for government jobs. However, Ould Daddah took the tribal fabric into consideration and respected the tribal balances. But the issue was not raised sharply at the time. Nouakchott was a small village. Tribes exercised their influence and dealt on its basis in their regions far from the state's administrative center.

The presidents who followed Ould Daddah assumed power with military force and ruled in the name of the legitimate Military Committee for National Salvation [CMSN]. Because they were from very small tribes, excluding Ould Taya, they dealt with the tribal fabric cautiously and did not try to favor the interests of one tribe over another or to alter tribal power relations.

At the outset of Ould Taya's administration, serious endeavors were made to counter tribal influence. But the state of political stability has not changed for nearly seven years, and the army's gradual removal from politics; the beginnings of democracy through municipal elections; the growing dimensions of economic interests; and, as we have already pointed out, the decline of the ideological tendencies; have restored tribalism and tribal tendencies to the forefront.

It must be noted here that emigration to the city and the interior regions' relations with the city first weakened tribalism, and then caused it to flourish. This divergence and this dual and contradictory effect is interpreted by the fact that urban life diminishes the tribal fabric, considering that ties of work, friendship, and neighborhood are formed. This is what happened in the initial phases of emigration to the city. But city overcrowding and the city's complex relations, when compared with bedouin relations, motivate people to seek family and tribal bonds to alleviate the urban feeling of loneliness and aimlessness, especially since the tribal fabric provides solidarity and promotes the sense of security and of self-protection. Moreover, Mauritania is different from many countries in that its cultural and educational

centers, and even aristocratic centers, are in the semi-desert, not in the cities, especially not in the capital, which is a newly-founded city with no history.

The entrenchment of democratic openness with free elections means opening the door to both individual and collective political aspirations. This openness did not exist under the single-party system of Mokhtar Ould Daddah's administration or in the military regime that followed. To realize individual political aspirations, the shortest, easiest, and most secure path—the tribe—is taken.

To tell the truth, the tribe has never been totally absent, not even from the ideological tendencies. The influence of some tendencies increased or diminished, depending on its tribal support. Therefore, most party platforms will rely either on a big tribe or on the alliance of a number of tribes to defend the tribe's collective interests. The parties that are likely to play a more important role are the parties that can surpass, without breaking, the tribal bounds by extending to the largest possible number of tribes and by going beyond the limits of one region, even if this is accomplished by agreement and alliance between differing tribal elements.

2. Traditional religious authorities, be they the three Sunna factions that are widespread in Mauritania, and to whom the majority of Mauritanian Arabs belong; or the religious authority figures, such as ulema, shaykhs, and clergymen, who enjoy great influence and respect in their circles. These authorities' role in forming and supporting parties has not become clear yet. But their influence will, most likely, remain limited when compared with the tribe's influence, because their followers belong to different regions and tribes, and because it is not in these authorities' interest to appear totally biased and to imprison themselves within bounds that are narrower than the bounds of their influence on the ground. Moreover, these authorities are ordinarily eager to avoid confrontation with the government. This compels them to either go along with the regime's party, which is what is expected most often, or to retreat and channel their sympathy for this or that side quietly and without provoking the government, especially in the initial phases of democracy.

3. Mauritanian capital and businessmen: It may not be completely accurate to list businessmen as part of the conventional forces. There are numerous wealthy businessmen who accumulated their wealth in recent years. A large number of them do not belong to important tribal and social circles. The conventionalism arises from the fact that the Mauritanian society has historically been a commercial society, and that Mauritanian commerce is a part of the tribal and cultural fabric. It is difficult to deal with commerce without recognizing this fact. Even some modern economic institutions, such as companies and banks, are founded on the tribe and within its context.

Businessmen will certainly have a major role in forming parties. They occupy the preeminent place in the

majority of the already-drafted party platforms and the platforms that are underway, because party activity in a society like the Mauritanian society needs financial resources to finance political propaganda activity. Because politicians in a semi-tribal society have to be social notables, this social status has its requirements and its expenses.

These businessmen now aspire to play a political role and to transform their financial influence into political influence. Even though some tribes have a larger percentage of wealthy businessmen, businessmen are now found in various tribes.

But businessmen's interests cannot withstand opposing the government to the degree of confrontation. Rather, these interests require many of them to be bound to the government and to the ruling party in some way. Available information shows that the majority of businessmen have expressed their wish to join the ruling party.

There is no doubt that this phenomenon will curtail the margin of party plans and will make the relationship of party platforms with the authority more of a relationship of dialogue than of estrangement. Thus, tribalism, which will regain its freedom under democracy will reshuffle the cards. This may lead to political chaos at first. But this chaos can later be controlled within a new political-tribal balance map drawn up with the regime's approval and supervision, because this control process cannot be accomplished unless the central government remains strong and capable of controlling matters, especially since weapons are abundantly available among many tribes; in all regions; and primarily, of course, among the Hassani warrior tribes, who are known as the people of the sword. These tribes view the acquisition of arms and training in the use of arms as a part of their historical heritage.

Tribalism will impede the modernization or development of society, and it will clash with the modernization slogans that may be raised by the intellectuals in the president's party and in the other parties who believe that modernization is the sound path toward alleviating the tribalism.

The problem is that the intellectuals who criticize tribalism cannot abandon many of the dictates of tribal affiliation, such as marrying within the tribe. In their criticism of the tribe and their eagerness for the dictates of tribal affiliation, some of these intellectuals display a sort of double standard when they say that they make a distinction between tribe and the tribalism that is founded on conventional relations and leaderships. They add that what is needed is not to destroy the tribe, but to rejuvenate it and to renew its operational mechanisms.

President Ould Taya realizes the dimensions and importance of the role of the conventional forces. This is why he has decided that his party should be able to attract and absorb these forces into the melting pot of the same party and interest, provided that the party ensures the coexistence of these forces with the modern, intellectual,

and young cadres that have ideological and political affiliations and that dream of developing society.

In fact, the majority of the tribal leaders, and most businessmen, religious authorities, and leaders have asked to join the president's party. This will strengthen Maaouya Ould Taya's position by making Taya the controller, not just of the regime's activity, but of pluralistic political life. Though this has its positive aspect for the country's stability, it will marginalize the other parties and will make their capabilities and role subsidiary.

Some platform authors have begun to review their calculations in this light, realizing that their party aspirations will be founded on tribal quicksand. One of these authors has expressed his concern over this phenomenon by saying: "This indiscriminate mass polarization process, using government inducements, will not serve the interest of democracy and, perhaps, it may not serve the interest of the regime itself in the long run."

[13 Sep p 6]

[Text] When talking about party and political pluralism in a democracy, one has to immediately consider existing ideological tendencies and try to divide them into right, left, center, radical right, and radical left. Democratic experimentation periods have been founded on this division. In other arenas, including Arab arenas, these terms have been replaced by the terms conservative, liberal, progressive, and revolutionary. But the developments of the past five years, or rather 10 years, have stripped these terms of their true meaning. Very often, they carry conflicting and caricaturish meanings to the citizen's and the intellectual's mind. When a party is said to be a national party, what comes to mind is that it is a regional, sectarian, or dynastic party. When a party is said to be a democratic people's party, the vision that one has is a vision of oppression, slaughter, the repression of liberties, and so forth. This is nothing but the result of the accumulated failures and bitter memories of the Arab ideological parties that have controlled power for a period, or periods, of time.

The latest developments in the Soviet Communist Party—the biggest, most deep-rooted, and oldest ideological party in the world; a party which, according to its literature, is supposed to be the party of the vanguards that lead the masses and the toiling classes—confirm that the phenomenon is international and that the caricaturish, comic-tragic end is not monopolized by the Arab ideological parties.

The ideological picture in Mauritania, with its meanings and its shades, is still far from what has happened in other countries. Some ideological tendencies in Mauritania continue to convey romantic colors to the mind of the youth which remind one, to a degree, of the image that prevailed in the Arab East in the 1950s, when the ideological appeal escalated, thus forcing the other voices to retreat in the face of its clamor and its heat.

But this doesn't mean that Mauritania's ideological partisan tendencies were not influenced by the failures in the [Arab] East, because these tendencies are nothing but a theoretical, and at times practical, extension of the tendencies existing in the East. Because the East's parties no longer exist except on the pages of the official press, ideological party tendencies in Mauritania have been experiencing an organizational and existential crisis for several years.

This partly explains these tendencies' reluctance to draft party platforms with which to conduct the democratic experiment, even though they can overcome the legal obstacles to forming parties by changing their names, partially or completely, to emphasize that they have no organizational relations with parties outside Mauritania.

However, it is extremely wrong to believe that these tendencies will not have an important role in the near future. This role is certain even though its features have not become clear yet. As we have already noted, educated Mauritanian youth still live in the phase of ideological romanticism or innocence, if we may use the phrase. Therefore, it seems essential to observe these ideological families, especially since they, contrary to the other Arab countries, continue to form part of cultural and political ambitions and collective ideals that have not been destroyed locally yet. The dimensions and importance of the projected future role varies from tendency to tendency. Mauritanian ideological tendencies can be divided into three main families which split into branches and segments. The first of these families is the pan-Arab family, which consists of two tendencies: Ba'thism and Nasirism. The pan-Arabist stirrings began in the late 1960s. The Arab Nationalists Movement was formed in 1970 under the leadership of Mohamed Yahdiya Ould Breidleil and it included a number of activist intellectuals, such as Mammed Ould Ahmed and Rachid Ould Saleh. But the movement quickly splintered in a 1972 conference in which a "byzantine" disagreement developed on whether the slogan should be "freedom, socialism, unity" or "unity, freedom, socialism". The Nasirists broke away automatically in groups that have been characterized by a historian of Mauritanian Nasirism as nationalist, Islamist, Qadhdhafist groups. A conference held in 1978 produced the Unionist Nasirist Organization. In a later conference held in 1980, the elements with Islamic sensitivity, such as Sidi Mohamed Ould (el Ail), for example, were liquidated. The elements close to the Libyan tendency were also ousted. The movement developed, its popular base expanded, and it turned into a relatively strong and organized movement that was controlled by elements hostile to the Libyan tendency. This movement advocated independence from, and non-subservience to, the Arab regimes.

In 1984, ex-President Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla launched an extensive arrest campaign against the Nasirists, after they had distributed a strongly-worded pamphlet opposing the military regime, graft, and inflation in March 1984. The tone of the pamphlet and the manner in which it was distributed angered the regime.

It was distributed on the same night in all parts of Mauritania. The slogans it contained were painted on walls in all Mauritanian towns on the same night. This made the regime believe the reports which were submitted by the [security] agencies to the effect that the Nasirists were preparing with Colonel Moulai Ould Boukhriss, other officers, and the Association for a Democratic Mauritania [AMD] to stage a coup against the regime. This almost coincided with the rapprochement between Morocco and Libya under the Afro-Arab Federation. But the arrests affected non-Qadhdhafist elements in particular.

The arrests created numerous conflicts in the Nasirist movement in the wake of charges from within the movement accusing certain leaders of being paid by the Libyan Embassy. The security agencies nurtured these conflicts by spreading a chain of other rumors channeled in the same direction.

Another reason that promulgated the conflicts within the movement is the emergence of most of the prominent leaders from underground. This led to the presence of two movements or leadership bodies: One underground and the other open. These conflicts influenced numerous intellectual elements which decided to abandon organizational activity. The conflict between openness and secrecy continues to provoke problems within the Nasirist movement. Some blame the absence of an influential Nasirist role in the 1990 municipal elections on this conflict. The underground leaders did not risk offering any candidate list, and this caused the Nasirist movement's cadres to be split among the two wings.

The mentality of underground action and of suspecting everybody, and the difficulty in opening up to and dealing with the other parties continue to pose a major obstacle to the Nasirist tendency, keeping in mind that this tendency is not characterized by tight organization and structure—unlike the Ba'th Party, for example. The significance of the Nasirist movement lies in the fact that it reflects a broad tendency among youth and university and high school students. This causes numerous observers to consider Nasirists the broadest movement in the country.

It is worth noting that the Nasirists dealt with Ould Haidalla's regime before the arrest campaign that was launched against them in 1984. In 1982, they allied themselves with the regime in light of Haidalla's rapprochement with Algeria, the Polisario, Yemen, Libya, and Syria. But they refused to participate in Haidalla's government, according to some Nasirist leaders.

In wake of the 1989 incidents, the Nasirists, like the other pan-Arab tendencies, rallied behind President Ould Taya's regime and participated in the government for the first time in the person of Rachid Ould Saleh, their historical leader, who served as minister of state for illiteracy eradication, and Ahmed Ould Jiddou Ould Khalifa, the current minister of information and the

official government spokesman, who previously held the portfolio of minister of maritime fisheries.

The most prominent Nasirist figures include poet Mohamed Lamine Ould (Elnati), (Elkori) Ould Lemine, the ex-secretary general of the Mauritanian Workers Federation, Taleb Ould Jiddou, Yahya Ould (Kebd), a prominent official of Nouakchott Municipality, and (Yezid Bey) Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, a history professor at Nouakchott University.

Most of these leaders tend to strengthen the alliance with President Ould Taya and to join his party on the basis of the Arab tendencies on which his policy is founded. But this does [not] cancel the opposition of the leaders who are still operating secretly and who block the creation of an open Nasirist party, at least in the beginning of the pluralistic experiment. However, the Nasirist movement leaders' accession to the president's party does not mean that the young cadres will follow. These leaders join the president's party as individuals, not as a tendency or a movement. This is a precondition that President Ould Taya has demanded of all ex-partisans. Moreover, most of the young cadres have grown up in the opposition, and it is not attractive to them to support a non-ideological party that also includes some of their historical adversaries, especially since the new constitutional formula has finally determined the national identity—an issue which has lost a large degree of its capability for mobilization.

As long as the presidential party is incapable of fulfilling the personal aspirations of everybody, it is not unlikely that some elements will, even though they do not constitute a noteworthy force at present, form a party under the pretext of extending the Nasirist movement, considering that this movement's leaders have stopped speaking in its name and have abandoned the idea of forming an open party by either joining the ruling party or by clinging to underground secrecy. It is not unlikely that these elements will have the support of Tripoli, which maintains firm relations with some notables in the Nasirist movement.

It must be noted here that the relationship with Tripoli is the only relationship the Nasirists have outside Mauritania, due to the absence of a Nasirist party authority at the Arab level, to the conflicts and disagreements among the Egyptian Nasirists, to remoteness, and to the scarcity of "party" literature in this area.

The second tendency in the pan-Arabist family is the Ba'th Party, whose features have been crystallized since the 1960s. It turned into an independent organization after the Nasirists broke away in 1970, as we have already noted. It has been led from the outset by Mohamed Yehdiya Ould Breidleil. From the outset, it has been tied with the Iraqi Ba'th Party and has never had any relations with the Syrian Ba'th Party. Its slogans have not been different from those of the Iraqi Ba'th Party. Rather, it has adhered to the National Command in Baghdad in its capacity as one of its branches.

Mauritanian Ba'thists have engaged in underground action from the outset. But this has not prevented their being subjected to successive arrest campaigns. They are undoubtedly the political group subjected to suppression most often. They have been jailed under the various administrations. This has made the Mauritanian Ba'th Party the best-organized and most serious party. This has had an obvious impact on its structure. On the one hand, the party has been able to attract a significant number of cadres, intellectuals, and members of the educational apparatus and, on the other, it has not expanded horizontally, in contrast with the Nasirists.

The Ba'thists have been able to infiltrate the military establishment and to recruit numerous officers. They were considered allies of the military coup which toppled Ould Daddah in 1978. It was then that Ould Barid Illeil was appointed minister of information and then minister of civil service. But the honeymoon with the military regime did not last long, considering that the Ba'thists have since been subjected to four arrest campaigns in 1979, 1982, 1987, and 1988. Excluding the latest arrests, the arrest campaigns gained them respect among ordinary citizens, even among parties that do not agree with them ideologically or in partisan terms.

But the latest arrests, i.e., the 1988 arrests, were catastrophic for the organization, considering that they took place under the umbrella of deep internal disagreement between Mohamed Yehdiya Ould Breidleil, the party's historical leader, and the local (Mauritanian) leadership. The disagreement was caused by the agreement reached between President Ould Taya and Barid Illeil after a long session between the two men to remove the organization from the army. In that session, Barid Illeil expressed his support for the president's political steps to bolster Mauritania's Arab identity and the democratic openness that he had initiated. But Mauritania's Regional Command rejected this agreement. This motivated the National Command to send one of its members, namely Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid al-Rafi'i (a Lebanese), to meet with the two sides in Rome and arbitrate their disagreement. Al-Rafi'i sided with the local command against Ould Breidleil, and it was decided to retain the military organization. So Ould Breidleil resigned and abandoned organizational activity. When the regime learned of these details, an arrest campaign was launched. Most of the leaders were arrested and tried openly. During the trial, the military organization was exposed, with names given. Military men connected in any way with the Ba'th Party were discharged from the army and tried. Sentences were issued against everybody, including Ould Breidleil. But he was released promptly and appointed executive secretary of the Military Committee for National Salvation.

All Ba'thists were then pardoned and the regime attracted the majority of their cadres, who have become strong supporters of Ould Taya. At a time when the Ba'thist organization has lost its effectiveness, the Ba'thists continue to be tied by a political sensitivity that unites them. The regime's adversaries charge that the

Ba'thists control sensitive junctures of the regime, regardless of whether these adversaries are adherents of the black tendency or of French circles that accuse the Ba'thists of playing a direct role in the 1989 incidents (even though Ba'thists were in jail at the time). These circles go as far as implying that President Ould Taya is sympathetic to the Ba'thists and that the regime, as a system of government, has become a Ba'thist regime.

But informed circles ridicule this charge and express the belief that the meeting between the regime and a number of Ba'thists has taken place on the regime's turf and under the regime's general policy, and not on the Ba'thist turf, especially since there is no longer a Ba'thist organization in the true sense of the word, not to mention that a large number of these intellectuals, many of whom are educated in French and open to other cultures, have discovered that the Ba'th Party no longer exists in Iraq and that the intelligence agencies there are more important than any national or regional command.

Therefore, these cadres are convinced of joining the president's party on the basis of the total abandonment of any other party commitment. This is, as we have already pointed out, a main precondition demanded by Ould Taya. But as in the case of the Nasirists, another wing continues to vacillate between the mentality of underground action and the desire to form an independent party. In the latter case, this wing will have to change its name and must eliminate any ambiguity in its relationship with any party abroad to be in harmony with the constitution and the parties law.

It is indubitable that those who join the majority party will have greater influence in political life than those who propose forming an independent party, considering their cultural standard and distinguished reputation. Prominent Ba'thist figures that are likely to play a future role in the democratic experiment include Momid Ould Ahmed, a historian and a researcher, and one of the movement's symbols who currently works as adviser to the minister of national education; Mohamedi Ould Baba, a lawyer who is in charge of the Mauritanian Human Rights League's foreign relations; Mohamed Ould (Beya), a journalist; Mohamed Ould Hamadi, who occupied the position of information director and general director of the Ministry of Information and who is currently President Ould Taya's press adviser; and Khalil Ould (Onmaoui), a member of one of the preeminent religious families and a most prominent cultural figure. He works currently as an adviser at the Arab Education, Culture, and Science Organization. These figures also include Mohamed Ould (Khabbar), a university law professor; (Defali) Ould (Essis), a businessman; and Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Jiddou, the owner of the biggest bookshop in Mauritania.

The question now raised is: Will the president's party succeed in becoming the melting pot in which all merge outside their old party affiliations?

The other ideological family is the leftist family that was born with the formation of the PKM [Parti des Kadhines de Mauritanie], which came from the Democratic Movement in the late 1960s. This movement surfaced for the first time in 1958 with the workers' uprising in the Zouerate mine. This movement also expressed itself spontaneously after the June 1967 defeat in a mammoth demonstration staged in Nouakchott against the United States. There are those who believe that the nucleus of all the ideological tendencies emanated from that demonstration.

But the PKM was especially influenced by the student rebellion of 1968 and by the new ideas of Herbert Marcos and Mao Tse-tung, even though some of the movement leaders had never been out of Mauritania.

The PKM's most prominent leaders included Moustapha Ould Abeiderrahmane, the current minister of energy, and Moustapha Ould Badreddine, the Training School principal.

Under the umbrella of international and domestic circumstances, this movement was able to form a base among students and some labor circles, especially since Mauritania's relations with France were very firm at that time. This movement played a very important role in 1970, 1971, and 1972. Its relations with Ould Daddah's regime went through several phases. After subjecting the movement to suppression at first, Ould Daddah decided to attract its cadres and some other cadres close to it, and appointed some of them as ministers in his government, such as Sidi Ould Sheikh Abdallah who served as minister of economy for several years, and Ismail Ould Oumar who was appointed as the first director of the Mauritanian Mines Company. Both men are considered modern educated elements that were close to the PKM at the time. But the Movement soon splintered after one of its wings decided to join the People's Party, which was formed by Ould Daddah and which was supervised by his wife. The People's Party embraced many of the Toilers Movement's slogans and a large part of its literature. At the time, the regime even fulfilled many demands and ideas expressed by the Toilers. Whereas Moustapha Ould Abeiderrahmane and Haibatna Ould Sidi Haiba were in the wing that abandoned the organization, Moustapha Ould Badreddine Moussa Fal, Kada Bakari, Yahia Ould Hassan headed the group which formed an independent organization that came to be known as the MND. This movement developed in a manner similar to that of most of the Arab communist parties, even though it had a Maoist tendency initially. Since then, the two tendencies have not agreed on anything.

The fact is that the first group, known as the Charterists [al-Mithaqiyun], distanced itself gradually from communism and moved toward an intellectual political vision based on the remains of a Marxist program mixed with democratic and Arab nationalist ideas. This tendency has cooperated with Ould Taya in the person of Ould Abeiderrahmane, who has held most of the ministerial

positions and who is considered the government member most experienced politically, in the person of Haibatna Ould Sidi Haiba who has held the position of minister of information and then of presidential adviser, or in the person of Dr. Mohamed Hasan Ould Abbate, the president of Nouakchott University. His father is Ould Abdeljalil who holds the position of governor.

These people formed the Association for a Democratic Mauritania [AMD] to oppose Ould Haidalla. Some of them were jailed, while others fled.

As for the communist tendency, it has backed away from entrenching Mauritania's Arab identity, has adopted slogans with a non-Maure black inclination, and has demanded the holding of a national conference on Mauritania. This party encompasses a significant percentage of the educated blacks and has a significant presence in some labor unions and circles. This tendency clashed with the regime recently, and a number of its leaders were jailed and then released under the general amnesty issued by the Mauritanian president. One should keep in mind that this movement was viewed favorably by the regime and enjoyed the protection of some of the regime's wings, such as Col. Djibril Ould Abdallah, the ex-minister of interior who used the movement to strike the pan-Arabist elements.

Arab tendencies consider the communist movement to be directly responsible for the suppression and incarceration to which these tendencies have been subjected. They also consider the movement to be tied to France and hostile to Arab inclusiveness.

The charge of hostility to Arab inclusiveness does not come only from the pan-Arabist tendencies, but is widespread in the various Arab circles. This charge curtails the movement's expansion, considering that the movement does not have popular bases among the ordinary Arab citizens who constitute the overwhelming majority. Even the movement's recent demands for democracy have not received a noteworthy response because of the movement's support for all the oppressive activities in Mauritania since 1979.

Therefore, the propaganda dimensions of the communist movement are much greater than its actual dimensions. The same applies to the movement's political influence in the 1980s. There are those who say that, in addition to the protection it got from the former interior minister, the movement also had the sympathy of some of those surrounding President Ould Taya.

Whether true or not, Ould Taya has severed most ties with the communists and it is difficult to imagine that his relations with them will be restored to their former level, especially in wake of strong criticism that has been aimed at Ould Taya and which has been founded on nurturing numerous rumors to mar his reputation.

Numerous intellectuals believe that the experiment of democracy and party pluralism will cut the communists down to their true size and that the communists will not

be able to pretend to be the victim defending democracy. Ould Badreddine has realized this fact and, therefore, has tried to open channels with other forces and figures, including some Islamic tendency elements under what has come to be known as the Democratic Front, which issued a statement that we discussed earlier.

Because the law prevents the creation of parties on an ethnic basis, the MND could be the vessel that absorbs the radical non-Maure black elements that preach Mauritania's African identity, that consider Mauritania's Arabism a transient condition, and that believe that Mauritanian Arabs should pack up and leave, riding their camels toward their oases in the interior.

Available information asserts that the Charterists have finally abandoned the idea of forming a party or taking part in the creation of an independent party, and that they have decided to join the president's party, in whose molding and boosting they will undoubtedly play a significant role.

These people believe that they should not stand at the boundaries of the past and of ideological origins, and that there are intellectuals who have developed personally and far from their ideological origins in the past 20 years. They have developed along a line parallel to the development of other figures coming from other origins. They believe that all have reached a phase in which they can meet by virtue of their very similar development—a phase founded on belief in democracy, in the Arab identity, and in the desire to develop Mauritania and to move it into the 21st century. They believe that despite the weak points and despite the regime's mistakes here and there, the regime's accomplishments give it enough credit to make it eligible to be a fulcrum and a basis for this meeting through the president's party, provided that a democratic action mechanism is allowed to be established in the party—a democratic action mechanism that is not based on ideological cliquishness or tribalism, but on a single vision of the real situation and of the future.

The third ideological family is the fundamentalist family. The circumstances of the rise and development of this family are totally different from those of the other families. This family includes three main factions, the most important of which is the Salafis [al-Salafiyun]. Most of this faction's followers are graduates of Umm al-Qura University in the venerable Mecca.

The Salafis are classified as part of society's traditionalist forces, which will play an important role in the future, not as an independent party but as an influential force, whether inside or outside the president's party.

The Islamic Cultural Society truly reflects this political faction in its capacity as an apolitical cultural society. This society includes important businessmen, such as Abdo (Mohim) and Haji, who died recently. It also includes a number of people working in the Islamic intellectual field, such as preacher Mohamed Fadel Ould Mohamed Lamine, the general director of Ibn al-'Abbas Institute for Islamic Sciences and Studies, and preacher

Mohamed Mokhtar Kaki, an elementary education inspector. It also includes a number of traditionalist figures and notables from deep-rooted families of learning, such as Hadrami Khattry. Khattry's final position has not become clear since his participation in signing the Democratic Movement statement and his subsequent detention. It is not clear whether he will continue his alliance with the communists within a party framework, whether he will join another party, or whether he will return ultimately to the president's party, as most of this faction's members are expected to do. They do not think that there are fundamental intellectual or political contradictions between them and the regime.

The second faction is known as the Islamic Tendency, which is influenced by the Tunisian Al Nahdah Movement and by Hasan al-Turabi and Rached al-Ghannouchi. This faction has tried to distinguish itself from the first faction and from the third faction, which is considered to be close to Khomeini's thinking.

One of the most prominent notables of the so-called Islamic Tendency is Boumia Ould Abia, a well-known unionist professor who works at the Teachers Training School.

The third faction is the most active and has relations outside Mauritania. It is known by the name of HASIM, an acronym for the Mauritanian Islamic Movement. This movement began to crystallize in the late 1970s, having been influenced by Khomeini and the Iranian revolution's publications. It was crystallized by young men who had studied more at Koranic schools than at regular schools. It did not issue its first proclamation as a movement until 1985.

Even though this faction's members had been influenced initially by the conventional literature of the Muslim Brotherhood and of the Islamic Group in Pakistan, and studied the books of Sayyid Qutub and Abu-al-'Ala' al-Mawdawi, they were later swayed by the Iranian pamphlets that began arriving in Nouakchott, especially the books by Khomeini, Ali Shariati, and Muhammad Baqir Sadr-al-Din. Thus, the faction became more subservient to the Shi'ite Iranian thinking.

For a time, this faction has been in a confused state because of the general developments in the region and because of the ebb of the Iranian tide. This faction's most notable figure is Mohamed Ould Abdallah, a history professor at Nouakchott University.

The fundamentalist movement splintered over what position to take toward the regime and how to deal with it. In 1982, Ould Haidalla tried to cover up his oppressive dictatorial regime by claiming that he was applying Islamic law [shari'ah], as Ja'far Numayri did in the final days of his administration. As Hasan al-Turabi did in Sudan, the radical Mauritanian fundamentalists supported ex-President Ould Haidalla strongly and enthusiastically at a time when his jails were swarming with detainees and when his intelligence agencies and National Disciplining Committees were provoking

terror in the citizens' hearts. These radical tendencies organized demonstrations in support of Haidalla, raising the slogan of "Haidalla is the champion of peace and of Islam." This led to a split in the movement between those who supported Haidalla and those who had reservations about him.

The fundamentalists also split in their position on the invasion of Kuwait. There are numerous voices in the movement that now criticize the indiscriminate support the movement gave Saddam Husayn.

Afterward, support for Haidalla's dictatorship harmed the reputation of these tendencies greatly, especially since those who supported Saddam severely criticize the current regime these days and believe that only one region and one tribe benefit from this regime, and that it is more dangerous than Haidalla's and Ould Daddah's regimes.

These tendencies take a moderate position toward the Arab identity issue in an attempt to attract the black ethnic minorities.

They also wager heavily on operating in Harratine circles. These inclinations emanate from the conviction that Mauritania's historical, cultural, and social circumstances do not help radical political fundamentalism to flourish.

Mauritanian society is a truly Islamic society by nature. Its Islam is characterized by tolerance. It is a society that respects customs and traditions by its nature. It is a conservative society and Mauritians consider themselves bearers of the banner of Islam and are very proud of the fact that they introduced Islam to the western and central parts of black Africa. The overwhelming majority of the Mauritians, if not all of them, perform their religious rites. Meanwhile, Mauritanian society has not yet turned into a consumer society. Consequently, it has not been afflicted by the negatives of the consumer society.

A fundamentalist intellectual has said: "Mauritania's Islamic movement came into existence in a climate that did not help it to develop soundly and to define itself as a revolutionary movement because of failure of the westernization plan, which has not borne fruit in this country."

He added: "The other factor that did not help the movement is tribalism, which is objectively hostile to the movement and which poses a major obstacle in the face of the movement's success in future elections."

The educated circles that criticize tribalism and aspire to break away from it are inclined, in the majority, toward the ideological, pan-Arabist, and leftist tendencies. For the popular circles, tribal belonging is more important than any other affiliation.

Even though the presence of the fundamentalist factions is confined to the Zawaya tribes, the tribal tendency plays around with this presence. In the eastern part of the

country, there are tribes that control the traditionalist tendency. Other tribes, such as the Idao Ali tribe, have created a Sufi wing in the fundamentalist movement. The Tchemche and (Tandega) tribes in Trarza Region have a major presence in the second faction, known as the Islamic Tendency.

According to the same intellectual, who happens to be a university professor, Islamic political action is in conflict with the personality and heritage of the Zawaya tribes because throughout history, the Zawaya slogan has been "learning and developing the land." Throughout history, they have lived in political laxity, i.e., in the absence of a central government. This is because Mauritania has known central government only twice in its history. The first time was on the hands of Boubaker Ben Amer in the fifth century A.H. [12th century A.D.] (the al-Murabitun State). This government lasted nearly half a century. There was also the endeavor by Nasereddine at the end of the 11th century A.H. This government lasted only a few years and collapsed because it clashed with Bani Hassan (the warrior tribes) and with the Europeans.

The Sunni Sufi orders, which are widespread in Mauritania, play a role and enjoy great influence among the Zawaya tribes (i.e. the learned and literary tribes), and in countering the proliferation of fundamentalism in Mauritania. A large percentage of both Arab and non-Arab Mauritians are enrolled in one of three sufi orders that have played an important historical role in spreading Islamic education and culture.

Thus, Mauritania's objective conditions are very different from those of the Arab Maghreb countries and it is difficult for the fundamentalists to achieve the same growth and strength they have accomplished in Algeria or Tunisia, for example. In these two countries, the fundamentalist movement spread primarily in the popular [poor] quarters and the overcrowded cities. In some respects, it has come as a reaction to the living and cultural crisis, to the predominance of the consumer society's culture, to the absence of minimal social solidarity, and to the cultural Westernization plans that have represented another aspect of political disintegration, of national defeat, and of the failure of the other partisan tendencies.

These elements prevent the fundamentalists from achieving victory, but they cannot stop them from turning into an important force of pressure and support or of protest.

The latest municipal elections in Nouakchott have proven that the fundamentalist groups have enough flexibility to establish beneficial alliances, whether with some notables or with influential businessmen. The fact that one of these factions signed a statement with the communists and with the black tendency movement is an indication of this flexibility. What is more, before the parties law was issued and the presidential plan became

clear, concerted behind-the-scenes contacts were witnessed between the fundamentalists, some Nasirists, and some Ba'thists to establish a bilateral or trilateral alliance.

Those who conducted the dialogue on behalf of the fundamentalists believe that disagreements with the pan-Arabist tendencies are more the result of inherited historical complications, such as the feud between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Muslim Brotherhood, than they are the result of real differences.

But since promulgation of the parties law, which bans the formation of parties on an ethnic or religious basis, and since the efforts to form a presidential party were launched, the picture has changed. Important figures from the fundamentalist tendency will participate in forming the president's party. This will make it difficult to coordinate between the various factions and to try to bring them close together and unite them as a single political force, which was nearly accomplished in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The question today regarding the fundamentalist factions is whether they will form a facade party with a name and a program compatible with the constitution and the law while waiting for a future opportunity. If they do, they will lose one of their most important weapons, i.e., the slogan and the name on whose behalf they speak.

Moreover, it is not certain that the regime will permit such a step. It is said that when the parties law was promulgated, the interior minister (who has now become the official in charge of the presidential party) met with the fundamentalist movement's leaders and told them: "We know every one of you and we know you by name and appearance. We will not permit you to form a party. But you may join other parties."

In this case, the fundamentalists may find themselves compelled to adopt the tactic of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, i.e., to infiltrate other parties and occupy them from within, even though the difference between the real situation in Egypt and the real situation in Mauritania is very great.

MOROCCO

King Reportedly Purchasing Crotale Missiles

92AF0099A Paris LE CANARD ENCHAINE in French
16 Oct 91 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Hassan II Afraid of His Air Force"]

[Text] For the past six months, Hassan II and Thomson have been secretly negotiating the installation of ground-to-air Crotale missiles around the Skirat palace. You can never be too careful with God: He always strikes from

above. The negotiations, which are said to be about to succeed, started without the French Government being informed of the plan.

Two obstacles must still be overcome: the stinginess of the Moroccan king, who haggles over the price, and the manner in which to announce the operation. Because admitting that one fears for one's life amounts to acknowledging that all is not for the best in the best possible world.

Mosad's Secret Aid to King Revealed

92AF0099B Paris LE CANARD ENCHAINE in French
16 Oct 91 p 4

[Unattributed article: "When Israeli Secret Agents Help an Arab King"]

[Text] Mosad, the Israeli secret service, has often provided considerable help to the Moroccan monarchy, an Israeli, Agnes Bensimon, asserts in "Hassan II et les Juifs" (Seuil).

This collaboration, she writes, started in the fifties, toward the end of the reign of Mohammed V. At the time, Israel had but one thought: to obtain permission for the 150,000 Jews of the kingdom to emigrate. Mosad's trump card was Mohammed Oufkir. Just like his king, the man who was to organize the kidnapping of Ben Barka did not conceal his good will toward the Jews. In 1960, the Israeli informed Oufkir of a plot, which he was thus able to repress easily. This earned him—as royal thanks—the position of Chief of Security. Ben Barka was exiled. The following year, Mosad concluded an agreement with the king who, over four years, allowed 100,000 Jews to emigrate discreetly to Israel. Even so, he asked for payment of \$5 million, most of which, according to Agnes Bensimon, ended up in a Swiss bank account.

It was again through Mosad that Oufkir is said to have been informed, in July 1963, of the existence of another plot aimed at assassinating Hassan II. That earned Abdelmoumen Diouri (whose expulsion from France was just nullified by the State Council) a death sentence in absentia. The Israeli-Moroccan honeymoon went on for years. Mosad trained Oufkir's men, and the latter made several secret trips to Israel.

Still according to Agnes Bensimon, Mosad—disobeying "formal orders from the Israeli prime minister, Levi Eshkol"—even took part in the kidnapping and assassination of the principal Moroccan opposition leader, Mehdi Ben Barka, in October 1965 in Paris. To what extent were the Israeli services involved? "No convincing answer has been provided to date," Bernard Violet wrote in another book to be published this week, *L'Affaire Ben Barka* (Fayard).

The death of Oufkir, killed in 1972 after a missed attempt against Hassan, did not put an end to the cooperation between Rabat and Jerusalem. Israeli

experts then trained Moroccan combatants in the Sahara while Hassan II acted as a mediator to organize Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. And in 1983, he proposed his "Fes plan," advocating recognition of Israel. For the Hebrew state, too, he is "our friend the king."

SUDAN

Strategy Conference Sets 'Lofty' Aims

92P40059A Khartoum AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH
in Arabic 27 Oct 91 p 1

[Text] Lt. Gen. 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, affirmed that the door is open to all to take the initiative and join the ranks of those who are working in the nation's interest and for its lofty goals; also, that the revolution has taken the country beyond petty partisanship and clannishness into a broad nationalism in which every citizen can participate to the extent of his capabilities in achieving a unified, cooperative society. He said in yesterday's session of the Comprehensive National Strategy Conference that the decisions and recommendations of past conferences would set the direction for the work of the appointed committees, which form the branches of the conference and have been assigned to complete a portion of the required information.

In its session yesterday under the chairmanship of Lt. Gen. al-Bashir, the conference endorsed the strategy paper in its final form after making some modifications to it. Its aim is to propose a revolutionary program for politics, society, public morals, economics, culture, and general affairs of life.

In the introduction to the approved paper, it is stated that the national aim that the country is striving to realize is the establishment of a modern, comprehensive renaissance, which will enable Sudan to have its own identity and to spread freedom to its people and progress to their lives, and to have the strength to safeguard its existence and its central values: honor, freedom, and prosperity. This is to be achieved by means of intellectual endeavor and by mobilizing the services of various agencies and establishments.

The conference is divided into nine sections comprising 49 committees, which began their work this morning in the Friendship Hall and will continue their meetings through 28 December.

Conflicts With Kenana Sugar Owners Outlined

92AF0043C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
2 Oct 91 p 10

[Text] London—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned from informed economic sources that shareholders of the Kenana Sugar Company are strongly inclined toward raising the question of commitment to agreements signed with the Sudanese Government allowing the company to export sugar and to review the prices at

which the government is buying sugar for local consumption. This will take place at the meeting that the company's board of directors and shareholders will hold on Tuesday in Cairo.

This is the third meeting that the company's board of directors is holding outside Sudan. The two previous meetings were held in London. The meeting this time is accompanied by the meeting of the general assembly, keeping in mind that general assembly meetings are traditionally held in the country where the company's headquarters is located. This is seen as a sign of the silent crisis between the government and the partners.

The agreements regulating these matters provide that the government has the right to buy 150,000 metric tons of sugar for local consumption delivered at the factory at a price to be reviewed annually based on agreed-upon rates. But apparently the Sudanese Government did not abide by the agreement. In the 1989-1990 season, for example, the government suggested 3,200 Sudanese pounds per ton as a price, while it was selling it to the merchants at 8,000 pounds per ton. The agreement also provides that the company has a right to export an additional 150,000 tons to foreign markets. The Sudanese Government may take this quantity and pay for it in hard currency like any foreign buyer. But in fact, the government, for several years, has been taking the sugar in order to meet increasing local consumption without paying for it. This has led to the accumulation of debt totalling about \$200 million for the sugar that was prepared for export. This is in addition to share dividends totaling \$170 million that have never been paid.

But this time the government announced that it has torn up the sugar export invoice. According to information that has been available to Arab economic circles for some time, the government has been exporting sugar. It has sold sugar in the free market for hard currency. It has also been exporting sugar to Yemen and Libya. This was confirmed for the first time by Sudanese Finance Minister 'Abd-al-Rahim Hamdi in an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT last Thursday. This has prompted the partners to ask the government to allow the Kenana Sugar Company to exercise its right to export as stipulated in the agreements, in order to enable it to refurbish the sugar plant that began production more than 10 years ago, since many of its facilities need to be replaced. These projects need hard currency, which is obtainable by the company exporting its agreed-upon quota.

The capital of the Kenana Sugar Company, which despite everything is an example of successful Arab administrative capabilities and the possibilities of joint Arab cooperation, is 590 million pounds. The Sudanese government owns the largest number of shares, that is 35.17 percent of the company. This is followed by the Kuwait Investment Authority with 30.5 percent, Saudi Arabia with 10.92 percent, the Arab Investments Company with 6.96 percent, the Sudanese Development Institute with 5.66 percent, the Arab Authority for

Investment and Agricultural Development with 5.5 percent, and a group of Sudanese banks with 4.45 percent. The rest of the shareholders own less than one percent each. These are Lonhro company which owns 0.46 percent, the Gulf Fisheries Company 0.16 percent, and finally the Japanese (?Nishu Wey) 0.16 percent.

WESTERN SAHARA

Algerian Proposal for Region Scoffed

92AF0080B Rabat L'OPINION in French 19 Oct 91 p 3

[Commentary by James Hajjam: "Algerian Resolution Is Attempt To Confuse the Issue"]

[Text] At the UN General Assembly, Algeria has introduced a draft resolution on the Moroccan Sahara issue, which it describes as "a question of decolonization to be completed by the people of Western Sahara exercising their inalienable right to self-determination and independence."

This same draft "endorses" the Security Council's call on the "two parties" to cooperate fully with the UN secretary general in the implementation of his plan and expresses "full support" for Mr. [Perez] de Cuellar in the efforts of "the United Nations, in cooperation with the OAU, to organize and monitor a self-determination referendum for the people of the Western Sahara."

Thus, sad to say, Algeria—even now, after the advent of the UMA [Arab Maghreb Union]—seems unable to understand the real meaning of neutrality and objectivity and continues, despite the resolutions passed by the UMA, to carry out actions openly hostile to the national cause of a member country. The spirit of Boumedienne is not dead.

While Algeria claims "the Sahara question does not concern it" and "it is not involved in the affair," its acts belie its official statements.

The Algerian authorities—like Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro], their protege—seem panic-stricken as the hour of truth approaches and they see Morocco is likely to prevail; they are trying deliberately to confuse the issue.

Already, in early September, almost as soon as the "cease-fire" had been decreed, i.e., once the UN process actually got under way, Algeria, via Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali, opined that the issue of a census of Saharans entitled to participate in the voting was "resolved" and that "there was no reason to return to that question."

By making such a statement, Algeria clearly aligned itself with Polisario's stand, discrediting its own official position; it also tried to place itself above the authority of the United Nations, which had never ruled on the voter lists, much less on identification criteria for Saharans participating in the referendum.

It was also clear Algerian authorities planned to continue their worldwide support for separatists and mercenaries.

The Algerian draft resolution confirms this policy, especially since this time Algeria has been forced to act unilaterally, because for once it is the only author of its resolution and does not seem to have succeeded in finding any "co-authors/co-signatories."

It should be noted that in the past, whenever resolutions about Sahara were introduced, Algeria always found three or four "satellite" countries to serve as co-authors and subsequently co-signatories.

That it finds itself alone today proves only that Polisario never had any real support except for Algeria, a fact that stands out all the more clearly now.

In its draft resolution, Algeria continues to speak of "decolonization," without taking into account the feelings of the Moroccan people—whose active solidarity with the Algerian people in their own decolonization struggle is a matter of historical record—much less international law.

Algerian authorities should reflect on the fact that Moroccan Sahara was actually and definitively decolonized in 1975, in the wake of the Green March and on the basis of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice [ICJ] and the Madrid accord of 1975, in other words, in perfect accordance with international law.

Continuing to talk of decolonization is a provocation, an act of disrespect for a neighboring country, and an attack on its sovereignty contrary to the spirit of the UMA, indeed a violation of its charter.

Algeria also indulges in talk about the "right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence" in defiance of the United Nations and the meaning of the UN process.

How can one talk of "independence" and make such pronouncements at the very time a referendum is being prepared? Where is Algeria's respect for international law?

Meanwhile, the Algerian authorities, blindly continuing to ignore the evidence, refuse to acknowledge that the Saharan people have already been exercising their right to self-determination, first at the time of the Green March, second by the renewed allegiance and joyous welcome they have always accorded His Majesty King Hassan II on his visits to our southern provinces, and again today by the enthusiasm and rejoicing of the Saharan population in the "Unity" camps of Laayoune, Dakhla, Smara, etc.

Even the Saharan peoples sequestered and taken hostage at Tindouf (a territory under Algerian administration) have manifested their self-determination, loudly proclaiming their Moroccaness during the uprisings of 1988 and 1991. The massive return of ex-members of

Polisario gives proof of this, as does the fact that hundreds of its armed members have fled.

But where Algeria is most provocative is in its attempt to inject an OAU presence into the organizing and monitoring of the referendum, in defiance of international law, which demands neutrality and impartiality.

Algerian authorities realize an OAU presence would be completely contrary to international legality, and everyone knows it—especially the United Nations.

The OAU, once and for all, has an ax to grind in this affair.

Everyone knows that the way in which the OAU accepted the fictitious SDAR [Saharan Democratic Arab Republic] into its bosom at the same time it recommended the holding of a referendum has made the organization a laughingstock and discredited any pretense it might have had to serve as both judge and participant. Because, quite simply, we do not live under the law of the jungle: We live in a civilized world that understands the meaning of law and will never allow it to be flouted.

Algeria must understand this reality and respect it, if it does not want to be branded an “enemy of legality and international law.”

Algerian Policy, OAU Criticized

92AF0080D Rabat L'OPINION in French 19 Oct
pp 1, 3

[Editorial by Idrissi Kaitouni: “Going Against History”]

[Text] One might have thought, with the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA] and all the profound changes that have occurred on the international scene—including the end of the Cold War, which had fostered the eruption of regional “hot spots,” many of them artificial—that Algeria would alter its position on the inalienable right of the Moroccan people to recover their provinces that remained under colonial occupation.

Unfortunately, despite all the steps taken toward making Maghrebian complementarity and solidarity a reality, and despite all the efforts made to efface the neocolonial legacy, Algiers seems not to have renounced its avowed hostility to Morocco's right to consolidate its territory integrity.

Thus, instead of moving to release the Saharans sequestered in the camps at Tindouf, instead of barring the mercenaries from using its territory as a base for attacks and infiltration, and in violation of the provisions of the charter establishing the UMA, Algeria has seen fit to offer a draft UN General Assembly resolution that revives the agenda of the Boumedienne era—an agenda we thought had been abandoned—with all its hegemonist and expansionist aims, which are incompatible

with the foundations of the new international order and with the changes that have taken place in the world on the eve of the 21st century.

That draft, introduced by Algeria, goes against History [as published] and in no way reflects the deep aspirations of the Maghrebian masses, who have striven constantly to rid themselves of the vestiges of the past and to open up new prospects for the building of a common future that would ensure the advancement, the flourishing, and the development of the countries of Maghreb, which have suffered so long from divisions, petty quarrels and tensions created artificially for the purpose of distracting them from the struggle against the real problems they face—political, economic, social and cultural.

In that connection, our Algerian brothers should be reminded that the OAU has no business being involved in the Sahara issue, because Morocco withdrew from that organization after it fraudulently, illegally, and scandalously admitted the mercenaries even before a referendum could be held. The OAU is thus excluded from the conflict settlement process, which is exclusively in the hands of the United Nations.

Moreover, there is no decolonization problem, nor has there been since 1975—when the ICJ [International Court of Justice] issued its opinion confirming the existence of ties of sovereignty and allegiance between the populations of the Sahara and the sultans of Morocco—the Green March, and the accord signed with the former colonial power and duly registered with the United Nations, by virtue of which Spain retroceded its Saharan provinces to Morocco. What we had was a liberation, a decolonization, and a recovery [of sovereignty] in accordance with international law and national legitimacy. Morocco has agreed to allow the Moroccaness of the Sahara to be confirmed by referendum, to put an end to the allegations made by its detractors.

But it seems that some minds remain stuck in the past, and that narrow and egoistic calculation still prevails, to the detriment of the highest interests of the Maghrebian peoples.

In any case, as far as the people of Morocco are concerned, Sahara will always be Moroccan, and all the plots hatched against our territorial integrity are doomed to defeat.

‘Demythification’ of Polisario Hailed

92AF0080C Rabat L'OPINION in French 19 Oct
pp 1, 3

[Commentary by Mustafa Nassiri: “Polisario: End of a Myth”]

[Text] In a dispatch from Rabat, AP reports that on 13 October some 300 “Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro]” soldiers deserted the camps set up in the Tindouf region.

AP attributes the story to informed sources close to deserters who have returned to Rabat.

Quoting the same sources, the press agency adds that "a vast search is under way for the runaways."

There can be no doubt this news is of the highest importance.

Its importance has to do with destruction of the myth of Polisario and the disintegration of the fallacious claims this pseudo-movement has used to mislead parts of the international community.

And it is important because when Morocco has spoken about legality, legitimacy and law, it has never misused or abused those terms and concepts—concepts to which our country is deeply attached. Our country has defended its territorial cause in accordance with the precepts of international law, all the while warning the international community against the false claims and threats to legality advanced by the so-called Polisario. Thus our country has been confident that history, as well as political and humanitarian reality, would vindicate it. That is why Morocco accepted the idea of a referendum for its own Sahara.

The return to the Motherland of many cadres and leaders of the so-called Polisario who have seen the error of their ways and the terrible hemorrhaging in the ranks of Polisario bands not only give proof of the disaffection Saharans in the Tindouf area naturally feel toward a puppet movement but also demonstrates that this pseudo-liberation movement is nothing but a pack of ravenous mercenaries with hegemonist and expansionist intentions.

For a long time now, Morocco has denounced the nature and real objectives of these enemies of legality and law. And now, as we approach the moment when the truth about that legality can no longer be challenged, we see them in the last convulsions of disintegration.

First of all, the maniacal statements about continuing the attack, even if that legality is confirmed, the attempted

infiltrations, and the sequestration of populations in the camps at Tindouf and elsewhere.

In fact, the disintegration of Polisario has been going on for some time. The international community has watched its irreversible decline: the crisis that has been tearing it apart for several years, the mass resignation of its principal cadres, and the copious hemorrhaging that continues today.

International opinion must realize by now that Polisario is doomed by the very nature of the elements of which it was composed, artificially united as they were for purposes outlawed by the UN charter and unable to function within its confines.

Polisario's death knell has sounded irrevocably, and the storm it created in the desert is subsiding. If it hopes to make sure the referendum is carried out properly, the United Nations would do well to reflect on its commitments and demarches.

First of all, it should understand that Morocco, which is a member country that adheres to the UN's principles and charter, has resorted to a perfectly legitimate procedure to win back a right specifically recognized by that charter.

The territorial integrity of our country has a solid legal foundation. Morocco's right to its territory is inalienable, and the Moroccanness of the Sahara and its population is a historic and legitimate aspiration of the nation and its people. The referendum must protect all of Morocco's rights and be carried out in an objective way. To this end, the stipulations our country has made are of fundamental importance and must absolutely be taken into consideration. The United Nations must take history and the law into account in its handling of the matter; it must not be taken in by the maneuvers of Polisario mercenaries.

Finally, the UN's commitment is to establish legality, not to endorse deceit and illegality. It must therefore take into consideration the testimony of those who have fled the horrors of the Tindouf camps to return to the Motherland. Their accounts say a great deal about the nature and objectives of Polisario—and about the tortures it inflicts on the sequestered Saharan peoples in those camps.

BANGLADESH

Increasing Instability, Violence Viewed

91AS1563A Dhaka SANGBAD in Bengali 1 Sep 91 p 4

[Article by Syed Badruddin Hosain: "What's Occurring, Why Is It Occurring, Who Is Involved"]

[Text] What is not happening in this country? The use of the first letter of Bengali alphabet before any word can change the meaning of that word to a negative sense and now we see an endless procession of such words in reference to the condition of our country. Poverty, allegation, dishonesty, unrest, disease, lawlessness, impatience, hunger, waste, etc., have created an undescribably chaotic condition. It is an unbearable situation. We walk in complete darkness and we are stumbling to take each step. The lack of ethics in politics, economy, and society are perceived as a friendly game. On the one hand, the prices of commodities have increased in the market and on the other hand black marketing is flourishing in business. Strikes are seen everywhere—in industries, in the transportation sector, in ports, in offices, and in courts. In the colleges and universities, we see the predominance of terror over education, weapons over pens, and arms over logic. The culture has been invaded. Life is full of anxiety and uncertainty. Everywhere there are cries because everything is scarce. One editorial in a fortnightly journal commented: "I feel afraid of looking into the pages of the newspaper in the morning because who knows what more bad news is waiting there." Actually, with this kind of tension we begin our day. Night comes after the day, but we cannot sleep because of anxiety about the next day. We have to sleep after taking sleeping pills. There is no security either in home or in the streets. Living is not only a problem, but a surprising event. You cannot travel worry free anywhere—on land, on water, on the railway or in the sky. Nobody can give you assurance that you would be able to reach your destination unharmed and in good condition. We began our political journey with a pledge to establish democracy, and we ended up with political assassinations and a military coup and imprisoned ourselves in an autocratic system. Then, we started our struggle for democracy again. Finally, we achieved democracy and a democratic government came to power. But before the task of uprooting wantonness from the state, society and administration was completed, the government confronted numerous demands. Before fully recovering, the patient becomes sick again. Many organizations and trusts have been founded for the benefit of the freedom fighters. But the irony is that, with patronization from the government, rehabilitation process goes on for those Rajakars who were against the liberation war. A number of them have become prime minister and ministers and received high positions in the administration and spread their influence to the sphere of trade and commerce. Yet, Menu Sheikh, the freedom fighter of Mohanpur, moves from door to door with a begging pot in his hand for food. Sakina of Shalna moves around the streets of the capital city holding the hand of her young

son in search for a living after losing her husband in the liberation war. Still, we feel proud about our sensitivity of liberation war and burst into a furious protest if we notice slightest dishonor to that feeling. We use religion as a key to the success in politics but many of us do not follow the teachings of religion strictly in our everyday life. Wrongdoings and corruptions had mixed up in the blood of our society and the whole society has become sick. The sense of values is destroyed and humanity is at stake. Happiness comes close to us, but if we try to grab it, it disappears. Poverty is our everlasting companion. We show our poverty to bring aid from the foreign countries. Some people drop the blind and deformed beggars in the street corners of this capital city in the early morning and pick them up at night after 2200. The lion's share of the income of these beggars are taken by those people who drop and pick them up, and, those beggars, who passed the whole day under the scorching sun or rain, get only one-fourth of their earnings. Similarly, common people get the benefit of 28 percent of the aid received from foreign countries and nobody knows to whose pockets the remaining 72 percent of the aid goes. Many events in our country are full of suspense like "why it occurred?" or "who was responsible?"

It is not that the "sea of life is covered by scum" only, but this sea of life is full of waves and thunderous sound of protest. You would not believe how true it is unless you go in front of the Press Club. Meetings, protests and gatherings have changed their venue from the grounds of Baytul Mokarram to the front of the Press Club. Every day protest meetings are organized here on the concrete pavement and the adjacent street. This change of venue has three advantages.

(1) This place is not wide open like Baytul Mokarram grounds and people can sit in the shade. So, this place is a better one for sit-in protests or hunger strikes as well as for holding meetings.

(2) It is very close to the Bangladesh Secretariat, which is the main target of protests and the place to press for various demands. When loudspeakers are turned in that direction, the speeches can easily be heard by the proper authority.

(3) Reporters do not have to go anywhere to gather information about conventions or protest meetings. Everything happens on their doorsteps from the protest procession to the protest meetings. But the real problem is faced by the people who have to travel by car or in bus or in rickshaw. Two streets pass through the two sides of the Secretariat. One of these is prohibited for buses or rickshaws and if the other one remains closed for meetings and conventions, those people who want to travel in the direction of the Secretariat face a great problem. In this country there is no end for demands or protest meetings. One or the other takes place every day. One day the Press Club area becomes loud with the demands of garment labor and employees. Another day a slogan like "slums cannot be abolished" is heard. Or, another day you can see the procession of women carrying empty

vessels and demanding "We need water." People from various walks of life—laborers, employees, professionals, traders—assemble in front of the Press Club with the objective to get their demands fulfilled. The laborers of sick industries place their demand—"Retrenchment of labor will not be tolerated." The students come here to protest against the introduction of the new grading system in examinations. They gave fiery speeches and destroyed automobiles. At the beginning, the government said that the demands of the students were unjustified, but later on accepted those unjustified demands. The students returned to schools with the joy of victory. The pavement and the street in front of the Press Club becomes heated with the demand of the government employees to give effect to the new pay scale proposed by the pay commission. It became a historical movement to paralyze the whole administrative machinery. But this time, the government showed firmness and did not yield to this demand. The movement failed. The participants of the movement understood that they were not standing on a firm footing. People's support was not in favor of the movement. How do they expect that this movement could have the support from the people? Only 1.2 million government employees would get the benefit of this proposed pay scale out of 111 million people of the country. Apart from the 5 percent of rich people in the population, all the lower and poor classes of people are living in helpless conditions. I went to buy a piece of sugar cane for my grandson. The seller asked 15 taka for a single piece. This was a tremendous shock. The saleswoman complained "What can I do? The prices of all the commodities in the market are too high." Inflation would continue because of salary increases. The traders are waiting in the market like hungry tigers. Despite thousands of electric lights, it seems to be difficult to come back home or stay at home because of darkness at night.

People are not only anxious because of the rise in cost of living, but they are also nervous because of the horrible rise of terrorism and lawlessness. Inhumane violence is spreading like a deadly disease everywhere from big cities to small towns and villages. According to a report in a weekly magazine, "On average six persons are killed every day by unknown killers in the city of Dhaka." According to this same report, the reason for this is: "The increase of the desire for material gains, greed and jealousy on the one hand, and the unthinkable spread of power of destruction on the other. With the combination of these two, the lives of the people of Bangladesh are at stake." In all the different areas of the country, terrorist groups are organized in the names of the leaders. They are looting village after village. They even engage themselves in clashes with the police force. Personal cruelties are also increasing at a high rate. The incidents like throwing acid bulbs because of being betrayed in love, wife killing by the husbands on the issue of dowry, and sons being killed by their fathers or brothers being killed by brothers for money are not at all uncommon things. This violent mentality of the society is reflected in the

exchange of bullets in the educational institutions. Academic institutions, one after another, are getting closed for terrorist activities. Recently, two commission reports were published about the terrorist activities in the Dhaka and Chattogram universities. We expected that from these reports we would get some deep-rooted study and valuable information and some real direction for the solution of these problems. It was hoped that the commission would go deep into the study of problem and would try to diagnose the causes of this disease. This would have been beneficial for the universities and the whole nation. We are disappointed by the report of the commission. The university professors were held responsible in both the reports. It was said that the teachers, for their own self-interests, used the students and provoked them. Naturally, the first question that comes to mind—what are the interests of the teachers? The speculative answers are: promotion in job, getting fellowships or scholarships for further study or research in the universities within the country or abroad, superintendentship of a hall, resident teaching position, etc. But there are some fixed rules and regulations set for this process. And in that process, as we know, the students have no role to play. So, it is difficult to find justification for the charge that the teachers "used the students for their own interests." On the other hand, in the greater interest of the nation, such as, in the historic movement for the establishment of an official language, in the freedom movement or in the movement against autocracy in the time of Ayub Khan, the teachers came forward to advice, guide and inspire students, which had been considered as a matter of high regard. In the Dhaka University report, 52 teachers were charged for conspiracy and it was done on the basis of a news report published in a paper. The authenticity of the news report was not fully examined. In the interest of proper justice, it is the standard practice to provide the alleged persons with an opportunity to explain their side of the story as a method of self-defense. Nothing of that sort had been done in this respect. But we are convinced that by putting the blame on the shoulders of the teachers, we cannot suppress the demon of terrorism.

The seeds of the existing violence, restlessness, and lawlessness are rooted deeply within the body of the society. Poverty, hunger, unemployment, absence of any exemplary ideals, the conflict of different thoughts and ideas, degeneration of sense of values, the spread of corruption, all these created a frustration in the minds of the people in general and in the youths in particular. The present condition of lawlessness is a combined product of the whole situation. Most important, an unseen evil power is controlling all these things from behind the scene. This evil power is extremely active to take revenge to fulfill its desire. If we do not unmask this evil power, we will never get the real answers to the question: why these incidents occur and who is behind all of these.

Zia Addresses Meeting of Government Officials

92AS0189A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 29 Sep 91 pp 1, 12

[Text] Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Saturday said the prime objective of her government was to build

an honest, efficient, dynamic, corruption-free and people-oriented administration to take the nation on the road to progress and prosperity, reports BSS.

"We want to present the people a good government which will work for their welfare," Begum Zia told the first-ever meeting with the secretaries and additional secretaries of different ministries and divisions at the Prime Minister's Secretariat in Dhaka Saturday after assuming the office of the chief executive of the country.

Begum Zia said the expectation of the people from this government following the ouster of the autocratic regime was very high and added "we all must work hard with sincerity and dedication to deliver the goods to the people fulfilling their hopes and aspirations."

She said both the government and the administration should be made accountable for achieving overall development in the country.

Begum Zia stressed the need for close relationship between the government and the administration for the total success of all uplift programmes.

Speaking in a posture of calmness and determination, the prime minister asked the government officials to serve the country and the people with sincerity, upholding national interest above everything.

She said the democratic government had been established in the country after nine year's of relentless struggle against autocracy. She asked the officials to lend their all-out cooperation in implementing the programmes of the present government.

Begum Khaleda Zia said we want to establish a happy, prosperous and self-reliant Bangladesh with the help and support of the administration in peoples representatives and leadership of the local areas."

Turning to the national problems, she said the autocratic regime had not only shattered the national economy but also destroyed all institutions through bribery and corruption. She said the people of the country were bluffed during the nine year's of autocratic rule in the name of development. "There had been a large flow of foreign aid but those were misused by the regime to cling to power," she said. If those aids were utilised properly, an infrastructure would have developed by now," she said.

The prime minister said efforts should be made to attain self-reliance in every sphere of national life by increasing production in fields and factories.

She also called for proper utilisation of foreign aid and said a number of countries wanted to provide help to Bangladesh.

Referring to the closure of a number of mills and factories during the autocratic rule, the prime minister said as a result a large number of people had suddenly become jobless.

She said her government wanted to restart those mills and factories and mentioned that Delta Jute Mills had already been re-started.

Begum Zia said her government would give priority to set up small-scale industries in the country including in the rural areas. "This will not only generate employment in the rural areas but will also accelerate the pace of economic activities in the country," she maintained.

Begum Zia said her government would lay emphasis for taking up programmes for balanced development of the country. She said the previous regime had undertaken development programmes only to serve their political interests.

The prime minister stressed that the mills and factories should run efficiently and be turned into a profitable concern. She said the closure of the jute mills had affected the jute growers.

Referring to terrorism on the campus, the prime minister sought cooperation of all quarters irrespective of political affiliation to eliminate this scourge once for all. On this score all should keep the interest of the country uppermost, she stressed.

Begum Zia said her government was determined to stop violence on the campus. "We held discussions with the political parties, teachers, guardians and students in this regard," she said adding "we will hold further discussion with them."

She emphatically said that her government would not hesitate to take stern measures to curb the campus terrorism. She blames the past regime for vitiating the academic atmosphere in the educational institutions.

[Text missing] clarion call to all concerned to raise production for strengthening the country's economy and making the nation self-reliant.

She said government would attach top priority to the building of road communication system and providing rural electrification for uniform development in the country.

Begum Zia stressed that the rural women should be integrated with national uplift work to achieve total success. She said development could not be achieved without the women who constituted 50 per cent of the country's total population.

She said her government would make optimum utilisation of all national resources including the natural gas.

Begum Khaleda Zia said that natural calamities had now become a regular annual feature in the country. "We have to fight calamities with determination and courage as we did during the last devastating cyclone," she pointed out.

The prime minister said some parts of the country were now under the grip of floods. She said rehabilitation and

reconstruction activities would start as soon as the flood water receded from the affected areas.

Referring to the river erosions, she said her government would take necessary measures to save the people from the erosion. She said that a large number of people become homeless every year due to this menace.

She said practical and pragmatic approach should be made to put an end to this problem.

Speaking on behalf of the officials, Cabinet Secretary Siddiquir Rahman assured the prime minister of their total support to implement the guidelines given by her in running the administration.

Principal Finance Secretary, Governor of Bangladesh Bank, two members of Planning Commission, Industries Secretary, Labour and Manpower Secretary, LGRD [Local Government and Rural Development] Secretary, Food Secretary, Shipping Secretary, Textile Secretary, Home Secretary, Agriculture Secretary, and Health Secretary, were among others, spoke on the occasion.

Biswas Explains Stand to Interviewer

92AS0187A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
29 Sep 91 pp 1, 8

[Article by Sheikh Mohiuddin: "I Will Uphold Constitution: Biswas"]

[Text] The presidential candidate of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and former Speaker of Parliament Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas has emphatically said that all the citizens irrespective of caste and creed will be equally treated under a democratic order if he is elected the president of the country.

In an interview last night Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas told this correspondent that he believed in unalloyed democracy and constitutional politics for which the people fought against the autocracy.

The elderly political personality Mr. Biswas confidently said that if voted to the highest office of the country he would discharge the constitutional functions effectively and faithfully. "I am prepared to make any sacrifice to uphold the Constitution," the veteran parliamentarian asserted.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas won the 27 February parliamentary polls by a huge margin of votes as the nominee of the BNP. Later he was elected the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad. Being nominated by the ruling BNP the old guard of the party is now contesting for presidency in the 8 October election.

I am happy to have the nomination. Rather I must express my gratitude to the BNP leadership and the rank and file of the party who honoured me as a candidate for the office of president," Mr. Biswas said.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas joined the BNP since its inception under the leadership of shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. Earlier he was associated with Jagodal which merged with the BNP. Since the BNP politics began, Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas played a pioneering role in building the organisation at grass roots level in the southern region particularly in greater Barisal.

During the anti-Ershad movement Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas along with his other political colleagues took to the streets and participated in the movement actively to end autocracy. Considering his contribution to party and also to the democratic movement Mr. Biswas got nomination. It was learnt.

Giving reaction on the issue of electing a non-partisan person president Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas dismissed the idea saying there is no such instance in democracy—either presidential form of government or parliamentary system.

When asked about a remark made by one of his rivals targeting his political identity in pre-independence period Mr. Biswas termed it a conspiracy to tarnish his image and to fish in the troubled water. If my political identity was questioned, I would not have won the post of President of Barisal District Bar Association defeating the Awami League candidate in 1974. During that time the members of Barisal Bar Association belonging to progressive forces voiced their support in favour of my candidature, he added.

Report on Bangladesh Community Party Congress

92AS0191A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 12 Oct 91 p 19

[Article by Zaglul A. Chawdhury: "Views Differ Among Bangla Communists"]

[Text] Dhaka, 11 October—The just-concluded fifth congress of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), the main pro-Soviet communist party, was the most stormy and turbulent in the history of the organisation. As the congress, which took place after a gap of four years, elected its new officer-bearers, including the president and the general secretary, it was clear that the reformists and the moderates have taken a dominant position in the organisation although the hardliners have made their views strongly heard.

The hardliners took a back seat but successfully beat back some thoughts to change the name of the party or party symbol "sickle and hammer."

The CPB, a disciplined and cadre-based organisation, was seldom known for differences within the party. But the international scenario and the setbacks to communism, including in the Soviet Union itself, opened a Pandora's box of differences within the party as regards the attitude towards the reforms in the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev's policy and the basic concept of Marxism and Leninism.

Broadly, three groups emerged in the organisation—one favouring the reforms and arguing that socialism has to be evolved within the context of a particular country without having to have a strict adherence to Marxism-Leninism, while the hardliners believe that the setback to socialism is a temporary phenomenon and Marxism-Leninism is bound to triumph. There is a third force known as centerist, trying to strike a balance between the two but is more close to the reformists.

Mr. Saifuddin Ahmed Vanik, party general secretary, has been made new party president. He is known to be the centerist and polled the highest number of votes when election took place for the members of central committee. He was chosen unopposed as president by central committee members but the election for general secretary saw a contest in which Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid, known as a moderate or reformist, won.

The central committee members elected among others Mr. Sekhar Shankar Bose and Shamsuddoha known to be moderates. The hardliners led by Mr. Selim and Mr. Manzurul Ashan Khan said Marxism-Leninism remained the basic philosophy for the emancipation of the "have nots" and there could be no deviation from this regardless of what was happening elsewhere. The reformist leaders say reforms are necessary and it is widely acknowledged now.

New 'Left-Leaning' Student Alliance Formed

92AS0192A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 27 Sep 91 pp 1, 10

[Text] Democratic Student Alliance (DSA), a new students unity comprising eight left-lenient student organisations formally announced its launching through a Press conference on Thursday.

Organised at the Madhu's Canteen of Dhaka University, Nazmul Haq Pradhan of Chhatra League (N-S) described the aims and objects of the alliance at the Press conference.

He said that the alliance was formed with a view to building a united movement against the terrorists responsible for campus violence and immediate implementation of various demands of the student community of the country.

He said that Awami League and BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] had failed to fulfil the people's aspirations after the fall of Ershad. He said that both Awami League and BNP provided shelter to the suspected killers of Dr. Milon and these parties had long been patronising the terrorists to establish its supremacy in educational institutions.

The alliance announced 10-point demand including eight percent allocation of revenue budget to education sector, employment against 1.36 lakh vacancies of different government offices and introduction of scientific and secular education systems.

The DSA also announced 4-point demand for immediate implementation. The demands are: arrest and trial of the suspected killers of Dr. Milon and collaborators of Ershad, establishment of armed and violence-free campus and solution to the prevailing crisis of Chittagong University.

The student organisations involved in the alliance are: CPB [Communist Party of Bangladesh] backed student front Chhatra Union, pro-JSD [Jatiyo Samajotantik Dal] (Inu) Chhatra League (N-S), Communist League backed Chhatra Moitree, Lekhok Shibir backed Chhatra Federation, pro-JSD (Mahabub) Chhatra League (S-S), Workers Party backed Gonatantrik Chhatra Union, JSD (Khaleq) backed Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Gonatantri Party backed Chhatra Samiti.

World Bank Concern over Economy Noted

World Bank Source Quoted

92AS0186A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
1 Oct 91 pp 1, 12

[Article by A.Z.M. Haider: "No Fresh World Bank Credit in First Three Months"]

[Text] Despite the lapse of the first quarter of the current fiscal year, no fresh credit has so far been negotiated with the World Bank which has pledged approximately 500 million dollars in Aid-Bangladesh Consortium meeting in Paris May last.

At least five to six credit negotiations including two in the industrial sector, one in gas sector and one in agriculture sector should have been finalised by now. But unfortunately negotiations for those fresh credits have not yet started, not to speak of finalising them.

Presenting this depressing picture, a competent source of the Economic Relations Division [ERD] told the NEW NATION that the World Bank's rather uncharitable attitude towards Bangladesh is attributable to a variety of reasons, the most important of which is the failure of the government to restore discipline in financial management.

The Bank is understood to be unhappy about the introduction of VAT [value-added tax] on extremely liberal terms leaving aside a large number of items from its purview. The Bank is also reportedly quite critical of the government's poor performance in domestic resource mobilizations.

It is of the view that the Government should have taken more stringent measures in this regard. The Bank is believed to be unkind about the government's unsatisfactory performance with regard to its loan recovery programme as well as about its failure to take timely steps in the power sector.

The reasons stated above are the major ones which impelled the Bank to take fairly tough stand with regard

to fresh credit disbursement to Bangladesh. Referring to no fresh credit negotiation with the Bank so far notwithstanding lapse of the first quarter of the current year, the ERD source said it is usually unprecedented. But nonetheless it has happened which is not quite comfortable for us, the source said. He however, hastened to add the tough stand taken by the Bank was purely temporary. The prospect of credit disbursement the source hoped, would brighten following commercial operation of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) from today. Immediately after the commercial operation of DESA, the credit squeeze on the power sector will be withdrawn. That will also have salutary impact on the disbursement programme in other sources.

The source, however, noted with satisfaction that funds were being released for on-going projects regularly without any impediment of bottleneck.

A 5-member World Bank team is arriving in Dhaka on 10 October to review the whole range of our National Economy with special reference to steps being taken by the Government to revitalize it. During the review meetings the question concerning release of fresh credit is certain to come up for discussion.

Pragmatic Policy Urged

92AS0186A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 30 Sep 91 p 5

[Editorial: "World Bank Warning and Our Economy"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The World Bank has predicted an "uncertain or clouded prospects" for the first years of the new decades which follows the low and declining growth rates in the preceding decade. In Its Annual Report, 1991 released recently the Bank has catalogued five other countries, besides Bangladesh, which have been categorised as 'slower growth economies' in Asia. These are Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The said Annual Report has enlisted six fundamental ailments to their economies which have been termed as 'Ominous Convergence.' These ailments to their economies which have 'Ominously Converged' are (a) rapid population growth (b) ecological vulnerability (c) large number of absolute poor and (d) deeply rooted domestic and external macro-economic problems.

It is disconcerting to note that economic growth in 1991 (meaning 1990-91), according to the said Annual Report is only 3.5 percent compared to the growth rate of 6.2 percent in the previous year of 1990 (meaning 1989-90) which was first recorded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its report entitled 'Asian Development outlook, 1990' and subsequently corroborated by the World Bank in its report under reference. The slow but gradual contraction of import LCS [Letters of Credit?] in the beginning of the current fiscal year suggest that the process of sluggish growth trend has not been reversed. For instance, the aggregate value of non-food non-POL [petroleum, oil, lubricant] items in terms of openings of

letters of credit like consumer goods, industrial raw materials or intermediate goods and some capital goods has declined from US\$139.07 million in July 1990 to \$111.78 million in July 1991.

Likewise the overall pipeline for import has also thinned out from the start of the current financial year. This is evident from the fact that overall outstanding LCS for import of POL, non POL, food and non-food items taken together have decreased from US\$1387.25 million on 31st July 1990 to \$1051.12 million on 31st July 1991. A decline of US\$336.13 million or taka 1310 crore in Bangladesh currency implies as to what a substantial amount of revenue earnings the Govt. Exchequer is being deprived of in the form of customs duty and VAT [value-added tax] which is the substitute of sales tax at import stage. Against such dismal performance in 1991 production of foodgrains increased by 4.83 lac from 187.47 lac tons in 1989 to 192.30 lac tons in 1990. Instead of apportioning of blame for every flaw or omission on others the Govt. would be prudent enough to take into consideration the following facts and data with a view to formulating future course of action

The GDP [gross domestic product] in 1990 was taka 72,275 crore. According to the UNDP [UN Development Program] report on 'Human Development 1990,' 60 million people of Bangladesh have no access to health services, 59 million have no access to safe pure drinking water, 103 million are denied access to sanitation, 41 million are totally unlettered and 91 million live below the subsistence level. Out of the total land the net cultivated area is 60 per cent which is the highest in Asia. Bangladesh land is infested with huge population of absolute poor. The quantum of arable land per person is less than 0.1 hectare. Agriculture contributes 38 percent of the GDP which used to contribute 39 percent in 1949. It thus transpires that no structural change whatsoever has taken place in Bangladesh in a long period of 41 years.

Against the backdrop of the above ominous convergence the present democratic Govt. will have to pursue a rational and pragmatic policy instead of harping on the oft-repeated theme of digging out the past. There may be divergence of opinion with regard to the prescription offered by the World Bank to tide over the difficulties. But there can't be two opinions on the emphasis given by the World Bank on the imperative need for exceptional skills in managing economic policies and infrastructure investments.

Financial Aid From IMF, EEC Reported

92AS0184A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 2 Oct 91 pp 1, 10

[Text] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved the second year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) programme for Bangladesh for an enhanced total amount of 469 million U.S. dollars as against the original programme of 346 million dollars, reports BSS.

Total release in the current financial year will be 195 million dollars of which 110 million dollars will be released now and the remaining amount in early 1992, according to a Bangladesh Bank Press release in Dhaka on Tuesday.

While approving the second year's ESAF programme, the fund appreciated the bold measures taken by the newly elected democratic government in economic management, particularly in areas like budgetary, fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies.

However, the fund was critical of the performance of some public sector agencies like Bangladesh railway, Power Development Board and jute sector and stressed the need for increased efforts to mobilize additional domestic resources to meet the higher salary bills of Government employees.

The Government, in its commitments to deregulation and liberalization of the economy and trade, has decided to lower the minimum L/C [Letter of Credit] margin for commercial imports from 20 percent to 10 percent with immediate effect. The existing annual foreign exchange quota for travel abroad has also been raised to 1800 dollars from 1500 dollars, the Press release added.

BSS from Brussels adds: Bangladesh will receive from the Commission of the European Communities (EEC) a project grant assistance of Taka 372.29 crore (102.73 million U.S. dollars) under the terms of two separate financing memorandum signed in Dhaka on 19 September between the Government of Bangladesh and the EEC.

Under the first financing memorandum EEC will provide a project grant assistance of U.S. dollar 14.70 million. The grant will be utilised by Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control for implementation of the river survey project. The project is one of the components of the action plan for flood control which includes collection of reliable all season data on the hydrology and morphology of key section of the country's main rivers system and to undertake special studies regarding the behaviour of the river system.

Under the second financing memorandum EEC will provide a project grant of U.S. dollar 88 million as co-financier with the World Bank for implementation of national minor irrigation project. The grant will ensure support to agricultural growth through facilitating increased private sector investment in minor irrigation development in the country.

With the signing of these financing memoranda EEC has so far extended U.S. dollar about 365 million as project grants to Bangladesh since independence. In addition EEC also extended 2.689 million tons of wheat as food aid to Bangladesh.

Expatriate Workers Demand Return to Kuwait

92AS0188A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
29 Sep 91 pp 1, 9

[Text] Bangladeshi workers repatriated from Kuwait during the Gulf war yesterday called upon the government to arrange their return to Kuwait for reemployment.

The Association of the Repatriated Bangladeshis made the demand at a rally it held before the Jatiya Press Club in the morning following which its representatives handed copies of a memorandum to the Foreign Office, the Department of Labour and Manpower as well as the Bangladesh Bank to convey their four-point demand.

The Association said that 62,000 expatriate Bangladeshi workers, repatriated during the Gulf war, were awaiting their return to Kuwait. These people were serving various Kuwaiti firms.

The association in its four-point demand urged the Government to declare its policy to arrange the return of 62,000 Bangladeshis to their jobs in Kuwait, refund the value of Kuwaiti and Iraqi dinars they deposited a year back with the Sonali Bank and pay 2,500 dollars as compensation to each Bangladesh repatriated from Kuwait.

The Association said that the United Nations pledged to make the payment to each repatriatee on 15 August.

The Association representatives claimed that like Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, Sri Lanka, India and the Philippines, Bangladesh also received Taka 113 crore from international aid agencies.

But they said that no measures were still in sight to rehabilitate the repatriatees.

Presided over by Ali Ashraf Khan, president of the Association the rally was addressed by among others, Noor Mohammad Siddiq, Abdus Samad, Momtazuddin, Anisul Islam, Akhtar Hossain, Al-Haj Kalu Bhuiyan and Zainal Abedin.

Shanti Bahini Called 'Tools' of India

92AS0185A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
1 Oct 91 p 5

[Text] Rangamati, 30 September: The Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Society (PCJSS), political mentor of the outlawed Shantibahini [as published], is again in disarray with its leaders getting disillusioned over their so-called border indicate, reports UNB.

Upendra Lal Chakma, a former MP [member of Parliament] and a leader of the PCJSS in exile while expressing his dismay said, the organisation's leadership were mere tools in the hands of Indian intelligence officials.

The golden temple of the PCJSS is a slaughter house where executions are carried out at the instance of RAW

[Research and Analysis Wing—intelligence agency of India] officials, Upendra is quoted as saying at a recent gathering on the occasion of a tribal festival Hal Palan.

The traditional festival of the Chakmas was held at the Lebechari refugee camp in Tripura, not far from which Upendra's second wife died recently without food and medicare.

Upendra said the Sanghati achieved nothing in the last 15 years and the atrocities committed by the so-called Shantibahini pushed the tribal region into savagery of the mediaeval age.

Himself charged for corruption and malpractice and forced underground for many days, Upendra, who formed his own Refugee Welfare Association, accused the PCJSS leaders of incapacity, immorality and greed.

He also accused the Sanghati men of jeopardising the interest of non-Chakma tribals and pushing the 13 CHT [Chittagong Development Authority] tribes into constant danger of extermination at the direction of Indian Intelligence officials.

"At the end of my life, I am paying heavily for the blunders committed and for betraying my homeland," Upendra lamented in the gathering.

Continued Reportage on Ershad Prosecution

Not Guilty Plea

92AS0190A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 30 Sep 91 pp 1, 10

[Text] Former President H.M. Ershad on Sunday pleaded "not guilty" and described the charges of amassing wealth beyond his known source of income brought against him as "false and fabricated" reports BSS.

In an emotion choked voice he said the case had been instituted against him with a political motive to malign him and also for squaring a "personal vendetta."

Mr. Ershad told the Special Tribunal trying him of corruption charges that a detailed submitting the accused's statement) will be made on 1 October with documentary evidences to prove his innocence. [sentence as published] He said another reason for bringing charges against him was to erase his name, associated with the development activities carried out during his nine year tenure from the mind of the people.

Earlier Judge Mohammad Ali Khan who read out the summary of the depositions of 48 prosecution witnesses [PW], said it seemed from the evidence that the accused (Ershad) had committed punishable offence under Section 5(2) of the Anticorruption Act of 1947. The judge told the accused that he had heard the deposition, cross examinations of the witnesses and seen the documents submitted to the court. The 13 page summary mentioned

about 111 documents and 14 items exhibited in the court by the prosecution in support of their charges.

After reading out the summary, Judge Mr. Khan asked the accused what was his reply to the allegation. Mr. Ershad who stood up, firmly stated that he is "innocent and not guilty."

In reply to another query he said he will make a written statement claiming innocence.

Mr. Ershad in his brief oral submission (with consulting notes) allowed by the chair after hearing two sides, said the Taka one crore 90 lakh found in his former Senab-havan residence was Jatiya Party's fund kept with him, the party Chairman. He said in fact the money neither belonged to him nor his family.

The former President alleged that despite written prayer, neither his wife nor he were allowed to be present during identification and valuation of goods found in his house, this results into mistakes in identification of goods and led to imaginary and irrational valuations.

Mr. Ershad denied that he had not [been] interrogated by an Investigating Officer and members of the Inventory Committee. "Had I been interrogated by them, I could have given a satisfactory and proper explanation of the money and goods," he told the court.

He also said that the Secretary General of the Jatiya Party has instituted a money suit about the money found at Senabhavan in which he and the government are defendants. He said he did not nominate his brother-in-law Mr. Mustafizur Rahman as his representative for it was difficult for Mr. Rahman to identify his belongings.

Describing the whole description of the case as "false and fabricated" Mr. Ershad further stated that no items were exhibited in the court.

In reply to a question, Mr. Ershad said there will be defence witnesses to defend him and his lawyers would give the names.

Later, the defence submitted ten names as defence witness including six members of parliament. Prominent among those names were Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Shah Moazzem Hossain, acting Chairman and Secretary General of Jatiya Party.

At the outset of the court, Attorney General Aminul Haque submitted an application which furnished dates of military commissions of accused Ershad for the court for taking judicial notice for the ends of justice.

Mr. Ershad after making the brief statement, prayed for one day's time to make his submission. Allowing the prayer the court fixed 1 October for his appearance.

The hearing of the case began in June. The Prosecution charged that the accused Ershad possessed cash and goods worth Taka 2,21,65,238.47, disproportionate to his income.

Report on Written Statement

92AS0190B Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER*
in English 2 Oct 91 pp 1, 10

[Text] Former President H.M. Ershad Tuesday said that he was convinced after hearing the depositions and cross-examinations of PWs [prosecution witnesses] that the government has failed to prove that he was corrupt, reports BSS.

Making a written statement under 342 Cr.P.C. the former president reiterated that the corruption case has been brought against him to malign him in public and also to erase the success in development activities by his government.

Ershad who was wearing a cream colour trouser and light blue shirt with a striped tie stood in the dock when the Judge Mr. Mohammad Ali Khan, asked him to read out the statement.

In his five-page statement read out in about 20 minutes, Ershad, besides attempting to prove his innocence in the corruption case, also gave an account of the performance during his tenure.

The judge, however, questioned the mentioning of political and other aspects by the accused in his statement. Although he allowed the accused to read out the statement, he observed that it (statement) should be confined within the allegations between FIR [First Information Report] and deposition of prosecution witnesses.

The former General said if minutely examined, the allegations against him would be found to be "completely false, fabricated and motivated." The case has been instituted as a revenge, he charged.

The judge earlier expressed his annoyance at the delay of the defence in presenting the statement of the accused.

The chief defence counsel, Mr. Serajul Haque, apologized for the delay which, he said, was due to some unforeseen and unavoidable reasons.

As the court was about to rise up at 1:30 p.m. for the day after few minutes of debates on the failure of defence in presenting the accused's statement, Mr. Yusuf Hossain Humayun one of the defence lawyers, entered the court with a typed copy of the statement and handed it over to the Ershad sitting in the dock.

The judge then asked Ershad whether he would like to read the statement. With a nod, Ershad stood up and began to read out the statement.

Most of Ershad's written statement was elaboration of what he had said on 29 September.

Ershad who renewed the claim he made on Sunday that the money found at his former residence in Senebhaban was owned by Jatiya Party, said the government has instituted the case against him knowing fully who owned the money and only to malign him. Ershad while submitting an account of the money, materials and other belongings showed that there was no surplus wealth to be charged about.

The former president alleged that in the course of the proceedings of the case, the prosecution had brought some unrelated and controversial issues aimed at tarnishing his image. He said despite the campaign that he had smuggled out 150 million dollars received from the donors as aid. The government which constituted a commission, failed to present any definite information. Even Fairfax despite investigation did not succeed in establishing the charge of smuggling out money, he added.

The prosecution earlier charged that the accused former President Ershad possessed cash and goods worth Taka 2.21.65.238.47 disproportionate to his income.

After Ershad resumed his seat following the statement, the judge fixed 5 October for examination of the defence witnesses [DW]. He also criticised the defence for not supplying the addresses of DWs and asked the defence to take the summons which was obliged.

INDIA

Military Cooperation Proposal With U.S. Viewed

92AS0207A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 11 Oct 91
p 8

[Editorial: "Indian and U.S. Defence Perceptions"]

[Text] India's consent—Even if it is only in "principle" as yet—to the proposals for military cooperation with the United States is an eloquent commentary on how decades old geopolitical perceptions and attitudes are fast crumbling because of their having become wholly irrelevant. Even five years ago, the government would not have dared touch such proposals emanating from the U.S. Army with a barge pole because of the political explosion it would have sparked off for responding to one super power's moves to lure India into its orbit. Except for the long-delayed recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations with Beijing by President Nixon and the withdrawal by the United States from Vietnam in the 1970s, the global political and military scene had changed little until towards the end of the Eighties. There could have been no getting away from a military tie-up with the United States being seen as an act of ganging up with that country against the Soviet Union. The move now being made by the U.S. Army as well as the Indian response to it are an indication that old complexes are beginning to dissolve and it is now easier for the two countries to shed their blinkers.

It will, however, still be necessary to understand fully the contents of the proposed defence tie-up and how it will serve its own political and military interests of which the United States had hardly shown any understanding. The unstinting military support which the United States has extended to Pakistan ever since 1953 when the United States decided to give military aid to that country continues to impose a huge burden on India because of the impoverishing defence expenditure it has to incur to secure its national frontiers. Though the Pressler Amendment intended to disqualify Pakistan's eligibility for U.S. military and economic aid and the backing India is getting from Mr. Stephen Solarz, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, do indicate a change in U.S. perceptions, not many in India could still seriously believe that the United States would yet begin to discard an ally in the subcontinent and make matters easier for India.

If the present U.S. interest in having a defence military tie-up springs from a heightened awareness of its strategic presence in South Asia, defence cooperation with the United States will benefit India only if it could lighten its own heavy military burden. Recurring reports about United States looking at Pakistan and a few West Asian countries as partners in an alliance for strengthening regional security as it sees it do not suggest that the Pentagon is very much perturbed by the possibility that this would only continue to keep India and Pakistan apart. The essential pre-requisite of a military cooperation between India and the United States is that it should help in bringing about the disappearance of the military threat on India's border with Pakistan in Kashmir which is worsening everyday with the Pak-aided infiltrator and militants. The United States should dissuade Pakistan from persisting with the "low cost" nibbling activity it has been engaged in by putting an end to the military support it has been giving that country for decades. The situation in Afghanistan no longer gives the United States any justification to keep Pakistan far more armed than it needs to be for its legitimate defence interests. It is difficult to see how any defence tie-up with the United States involving nothing more than exchange of visits by chiefs of armed forces, joint training programmes, etc., could serve India's interests unless the military threat to its security and integrity is made to recede.

Papers Report, Comment on Visit of Carla Hills

7 Oct Press Conference

92AS0210A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 8 Oct 91
p 9

[Boldface words, quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, 7 October: As if responding to the adverse media hype and demonstrations against her visit to India, Ms. Carla Hills, the high-profile United States Trade Representative (USTR), today emphasised that she was not at all hostile to India. "We have made an analysis of the situation and once we share the data with

you, I am sure that our point of view will be India's point of view. It will not be because we have suggested changes in the field of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), it will be in India's interest to do so.

Ms. Hills, who addressed a crowded press conference in the afternoon, seemed well briefed about the resentment in certain quarters about her visit which has been seen as one aimed at pressuring India to change its patent laws. In contrast to her forthright pronouncements during her interaction with Indian industrialists earlier in the day, at the press meet, there was a careful avoidance of any hint of arrogance and the emphasis was more on "India's interests" and the fact that democratic India should be a rightful trade partner of democratic United States. Up-to-date with her facts, she corrected a correspondent who said that 250 Members of Parliament had signed a petition against any change in the patent laws under U.S. pressure. "The 250 people comprised some Members of Parliament and opinion leaders," she said and expressed the view that once they see the U.S. analysis, they would change their opinion.

Asked about her response to India's stand that trade in services should be linked to grant of immigration facilities to Indians, the USTR said immigration was not an issue which was included in the GATT negotiations. "There are many issues on which nations should talk, on immigration, for instance, and even environment. But this is not the forum for this," was her categorical assertion.

Ms. Hills, who is designated Ambassador and is a member of President, Mr. George Bush's Cabinet, also slipped in the point why the United States had targeted India under the Super and Special 301 laws despite the fact that India's trade surplus with the United States was marginal. Without actually saying so much, the point was put across that India, till recently, had been more of an impediment than help in the progress of the Uruguay Round. This was followed up with the suggestion that India could maximise the effectiveness of its recently announced reforms by ensuring that its entrepreneurs could take advantage of a modern and thriving world trading system.

Ms. Hills summed up the outcome of her visit to India, where she met the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Commerce Minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, with a simple response—"Every country I visit I consider it a success."

'Not a threat': Again when told as to whether it did not amount to a kind of threat when she said at one point that agreement on IPR was in India's interest and at another occasion that the U.S. Congress had constitutional control over that country's commerce. Ms. Hills observed 'I don't think so. We have to work together.' If you protect the patents it would reduce drug prices. Moreover patents of over 90 percent of the drugs sold in India had expired.

She said if these facts were made known in India then it would be possible for India to take its own decision than talk of U.S. pressure. In this context, Ms. Hills referred to India's vibrant computer software industry. Responding to a question on the possibility of the United States extending GSP [Generalized System of Preferences], she said it would depend on the stand taken by India on IPR.

Ms. Hills said in the United States, the Congress had constitutional power over trade so that the laws were adjusted in a sensible way. Thus, those countries which had a different view on IPR, would get less preference. She said if the data on pharmaceuticals collected by them were to be disseminated in India and the data on IPR were shared for greater education, then there may not be any difference between the Indian and U.S. point of view.

India rules: Ms. Hills also expressed reservation over Indian rules relating to export obligation by foreign companies intending to invest in India and the insistence on local content. She said both these provisions worked against encouraging direct foreign investment. On services she was of the view that it called for greater discussions. In any case, issues relating to immigration in this context were not even on the table and was not encompassed by the Uruguay round.

Earlier, in the question and answer session with industrialists, Ms. Hills when asked about the new bilateral trading blocks being conceived by the United States with Canada and Mexico, she said 'I never used the word bloc.' According to Ms. Hills, the United States wanted North America to be even more competitive and the move in that direction was compatible with every item on the agenda of Uruguay round. Even in relation to the issue of IPR, she said a good dispute settlement mechanism was being established. In the area of tariff she said Mexico had reduced it from 100 percent to 20 percent. This was Mexico would be able to attract more direct foreign investment, create new jobs, stop capital flight and become a better global player. [sentence as published]

Negative aspect: But as Ms. Hills made the point about Mexico, the ASSOCHAM [Associated Chamber of Commerce] president, Mr. N. Sankar, said 'India of 1991 was not Mexico or Indonesia' and, therefore, one should give time for understanding the ground reality. Mr. Sankar said what was getting focussed was the negative aspect and not the positive side. Mr. Binay Kumar, industrialist, asked why the United States opposed the Indian and Pakistani stand on Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA). Ms. Hills said the United States was also in favour of the stand of the two countries. The transitional period of 10 years for dismantling the MFA as followed by GATT was to help the importing countries to adjust to the changing scenario she remarked.

Asked as to why the United States was impatient with India when it had shown patience with Europe on the

agriculture issue at the last meeting of GATT, Ms. Hills said the United States had showed patience with Europe, Japan, Korea on issues relating to agriculture and market access even though the talks broke. But immediately she observed that 'under our system of government, the congress has control over commerce.' Without responding to the question directly, Ms. Hills said 'We too are a minority Government and we have debates on agriculture and use of trade laws. We have been discussing with India over the last five years on IPR and we have exhibited patience.'

When Ms. Hills was asked whether IPR was the only bar to increased foreign investment to India, she replied 'No it is not.' Many elements have to be hospitable and investment, like water, will find its own level. In this context, she said insistence on indigenous content (perhaps PMP [Phased Manufacturing Programme]) and export obligation were also as much a barrier to technology as others.

Patent Dispute 'Overblown'

92AS0210B Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 9 Oct 91 p 12

[Editorial: "Overblown Dispute"]

[Text] Differences between India and the USA on intellectual property rights (IPR) appear to have narrowed down significantly. This was evident at the talks the U.S. trade representative, Ms. Carla Hills, had in the last few days in New Delhi. On copyright and piracy the two countries have a convergence of views, and India as a software exporter stands to lose as much as U.S. software companies if piracy is not checked. The two countries remain far apart on the issue of patents, with the Indian side insisting on sticking to its legislation which prohibits product patents and has a short patent life for drugs and food products. India's official position is that its patents act helps it keep the cost of health care low, and that giving greater protection to patent-holders, as in Mexico's recent law which Ms. Hills recommends, will hit India's poor. In fact most poor Indians do not use allopathic drugs at all, and stick to ayurvedic, unani and homeopathic medicines. International patents have expired on more than 90 percent of drugs made in India, so that the dispute is over a very limited area. While much heat has been generated on this issue, and many members of parliament have submitted a memorandum urging the government to hold firm, both the damage to the United States alleged by Ms. Hills and the benefit to India alleged by the MPs [members of Parliament] is small. Whatever the final outcome, it will not matter much, and should not be viewed as more than a minor irritant in bilateral relations.

However, the Indian case is certainly stronger than the U.S. one. India is already liberalising, is keen on curbing piracy, and is discussing IPR anyway in GATT. Given this, there is every reason for the United States to desist from any action under special 301. The Special 301

legislation goes against the spirit of multi-lateralism implied by GATT, and has been criticised as retrograde in the United States itself, as well as by respected economic journals the world over. India itself is moving to new levels of innovation where in due course its own innovators will require tighter patent laws, but at its current stage of development it should not be asked to scrap its patents act wholesale. There is a case for India amending its patents legislation at its own pace but not under threat of Special 301. Even if the United States decides to retaliate through trade imposts on, say, exports, these are likely to be as marginal as the alleged damage by India to U.S. patent holders. However, it will be better for both sides if the dispute is settled amicably, largely on the basis of India curbing piracy. There were indications during Ms. Hills' visit that this might indeed be the outcome.

BJP Stand

92AS0210C Madras THE HINDU in English 9 Oct 91
p 11

[Text] New Delhi, 8 October: Mr. K.R. Malkani, official spokesman of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] while appreciating the anxiety of the U.S. Trade Representative, Ms. Carla Hills for increased U.S. investment in, and trade with, India, today said that "it takes two to invest and to trade." Unfortunately, the United States has backed out of the Bokaro Steel Plant project after making us wait for the same for years. All that its investors seem to offer was "Pepsi Cola and Potato chips," he said.

Mr. Malkani said that in any case, India has a continental market of its own and was interested more in agriculture and our industry than in imports and exports. Also, we have a strong and hallowed tradition of Swadeshi.

He said in response to a question on whether Indian technicians, professionals and other intellectuals would have free access to the U.S. market under the Intellectual Property Rights [IPR], Ms. Hills had remarked that that "would be immigration and not trade. Obviously, the United States was more interested in intellectual "property" than in intellectuals.

Mr. Malkani said that Ms. Hills was candid enough to say that "we too are a minority government," and that the U.S. Congress was vested with a constitutional prerogative to recommend extreme action on IPR issue. There is, however, one difference in the minority situations of the two government.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] spokesman said that "we hope Washington appreciates the Indian position. We hope it hastens slowly in whatever it does and does not try to hustle us in any way." Perhaps it would be best for the developed world to listen to its own enlightened men and permit developing countries freely to use all foreign patents in industries producing for the domestic market.

Cooperation With Soviets in S&T Discussed

92AS0212A Madras THE HINDU in English 8 Oct 91
p 4

[Italicized words as published]

[Text] Jaipur, 7 October: A meeting of the high-level group of scientists from the Soviet Union and India held sometime ago spelt out specific areas of cooperation in science and technology. Scientific studies including R&D have been chosen as one of the fourteen areas of cooperation between the two countries.

The Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) at Jodhpur and the Institute of Desert, Ashkabad, in the Soviet Union were identified as the coordinating agencies for this endeavour, when scientists of the two countries met at Jodhpur early last month. Projects relating to desertification, mapping and monitoring, problem of sand drift and its control, pasture land management and eco-physiological studies of insect pests in the desert ecosystem were discussed.

Joint studies on the deserts of the two countries would enable scientists to exchange useful plant material. India would get from Russia seeds of a hardy plant, *amerden-dron*, for growing in arid tracts and to tame the desert.

Turkmenian scientists have done commendable work in developing the technology for cultivation of *arid lands*, grapes and melon are grown in abundance in the desert experimental plots there.

Indian experts feel hundreds of thousands of hectares in the semi-arid tracts in western India offer good scope for adopting this technology.

Use of undeveloped wastelands is also an important area of Soviet cooperation in agriculture which the Jodhpur meeting took special note of.

The Director of CAZRI, Mr. R.P. Dhir, said the joint monograph, "Karakul-Thar desert," with contributions from experts from the USSR and India is being brought in English and Russia.

Soviets May Seek Joint Production of War Planes

92AS0918A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA
in English 20 Oct 91 pp 1, 24

[Article by Pravin Sawhney: "Soviet Air Show To Lure IAF"]

[Text] New Delhi, 19 October—The Soviet Air Force, for the first time, is likely to conduct an airshow of its top-of-the-line aircraft and helicopters in India, before the end of the year, according to sources. The dates are yet to be finalised.

Interestingly, the Soviet airshow in India will closely follow the Soviet air-show in Dubai, slated for November. While the Dubai air-show is to attract foreign customers for the aircraft already in Soviet service,

the Delhi show will concentrate on luring the Indian Air Force to offer joint production to such aircraft, which are still in the design or the flight-testing stage in the Soviet Union. These include Su-37 and Yak-141, the world's first supersonic short take off and vertical landing fighter (STOVL), whose flight-testing is itself difficult, because of Kremlin's reluctance to invest more money in this programme. Other aircraft on display will be the MiG-31 and several helicopters of the MI series.

The production of these combat aircraft for the Soviet Air Force have been severely curtailed in view of the Soviet policy of konvertsiya (conversion), in which three major combat aircraft manufacturing plants out of the six in the Soviet Union, have been closed down due to major defence budget cuts and the design bureau's new-found freedom following the breakdown of the Soviet political system.

In this context, the Soviet Union has offered a multi-role fighter Su-37, which is still in the design stage, as an interim replacement for the light combat aircraft (LCA). Although the Soviets have offered co-production of the aircraft at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, defence ministry sources evincing interest in the offer suggest that eventual trust will be reposed in the indigenous LCA.

The sources are of the opinion that Su-37 meets all requirements for an Indian LCA. It is an optimised air combat fighter. The other requirements for an LCA include an empty weight of around 5,500 kg, with a warload capacity of 4,000 kg and seven operational weapon stations (meaning seven types of weapon systems can simultaneously be delivered from the aircraft), functioning at a speed of 1.6 mach at a height of 12 km. This implies a supersonic status at sea-level with the aircraft providing a 8.1 thrust ratio, between the engine and mass of the aircraft.

Although the defence research and development organisation (DRDO) working since over 12 years, at the gas turbine research establishment at Bangalore claims to have achieved substantial progress in the production of indigenous GTX35 (Kaveri) engine for the LCA, the ground reality appear much to the contrary. India recently placed a large follow-on order with the Americans to power some 50 additional LCA with F404 engines, in addition to 12 engines for the first six aircraft already on order.

Experts feel that the order placed for the F404 engines is large enough for prototype testing. In case there exist plans to change the F404 powered LCA to Kaveri powered LCA, a new model itself of the LCA will have to be made, by which time the design itself would need to be changed. By ORDO's own admission, the LCA will be offered only in 1995 to the air force for user trials.

The engines being used in the latest LCAs the world over produce a 10.1 thrust ratio and also provide the fly-by-wire capability. This means that all functions in the

aircraft are computerised and take minimum time compared to mechanical operations. This facility will be available in the SU-37 aircraft. Experts, however, point out that though the fly-by-wire is a fast regulating system, its reliability is unknown. This system has not taken any proven battle damage. In the recent Gulf war, this system could not be evaluated as the Iraqi air force was not operational.

Sri Lanka Signs Trade Agreement

92AS0209A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 11 Oct 91 p 13

[Text] Colombo, 10 October (PTI): India and Sri Lanka yesterday signed an agreement on bilateral co-operation in trade, finance and investment identifying areas for increased co-operation.

The agreement was signed by Dr. G. Sundaram, joint secretary, commerce, and leader of a high-level Indian delegation and Mr. R.A.P. Goonatilake, secretary, trade and commerce, government of Sri Lanka, under the auspices of the Sri Lanka-India sub-commission on trade, finance and investment.

The agreement was signed after three days of deliberations between the two sides. Expressing satisfaction over the deliberations, Dr. Sundaram said the outcome provided a lot of optimism. "If both sides take things seriously, we can produce results very soon," he told reporters.

Soviet Paper Says CPSU Funded CPI

92AS0201A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 12 Oct 91 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, 11 October—The Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) has distributed more than \$20 million every year since 1987 to "fraternal parties"—including the CPI [Communist Party of India]—through KGB channels, according to a report in the latest issue of the Soviet weekly, ROSSIA. The CPI received \$500,000—a modest sum compared to the \$2 million which was made available to the French Communist Party.

The financial aid to "fraternal" organisations was created by Stalin during the late 1940s and was managed by the department of international relations of the central committee of the Soviet Communist Party, according to ROSSIA. The weekly did not reveal the sum total of such monetary aid during the previous years.

A document dated 4 February 1987 (NP-51/149), among the confidential papers seized from the Soviet central committee's building in Moscow's "Staraiia Plochad" confirm that a budget of more than \$20 million had been voted for this year, of which \$17.5 million were financed by the Soviet Communist Party.

The rest came from the east-bloc countries. According to a document dated 25 February 1987 (NP-54/18) \$2 million were given to the French Communist Party and

\$2 million more to the U.S. Communist Party. The Portuguese Communist Party got \$1 million.

Meanwhile, the editor of L'HUMANITE the French communist newspaper has issued a prompt and categorical denial of the ROSSIA report.

CPI-M Leader Writes on Differences With USSR

92AS0200A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 12 Oct 91 p 8

[Text] Calcutta, 11 October—"The Soviet Union has turned into a junior partner of the USA," says Mr. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, general secretary of the CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist].

The veteran CPM leader said this in an article published in the festival supplement of the CPM's Bengali ideological weekly, *Deshhitoishi*. He strongly opposed the Soviet president, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachov's policy which, he felt, had brought about the present disaster in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Namboodiripad said Mr. Khurshchov had strived to achieve world peace through diplomacy. Mr. Gorbachov had expanded the policy further and declared that the main contradictions in international politics had undergone a change. The acceptance of the theory that imperialism was no longer an enemy of world socialism had created such a ground reality that when American imperialism launched attacks on Third World countries, the Soviet Union remained a silent spectator. The Soviet Union turned into a junior partner of the USA when the latter imposed its will on President Saddam Husayn of Iraq during the Gulf war, he said.

He felt the current political upheavals in the Soviet Union were not a sudden development. For the past 30 years the Soviet Union had been harping the revisionist theme that the days of imperialism were over and that it had lost its effectiveness. Under the circumstances, world peace can be maintained without the determined struggle of the working class and other struggle masses.

The CPM leader pointed out that this party had supported the Soviet Union's efforts to save the world from a nuclear holocaust. It had welcomed the U.S.-Soviet agreement to reduce the danger of a nuclear war. But the CPM differed with the Soviet Union when the latter adopted the theory of a change in the contradictions in international relations.

He pointed out that the attempt by some close associates of Mr. Gorbachov to replace him indicated that the CPSU and the people of Soviet Union were not ready to accept the perilous steps being taken by Mr. Gorbachov.

Analyst Praises Rao's Performance as 'Noteworthy'

92AS0063A Calcutta *ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA*
in Bengali 21 Sep 91 p 4

[Article by Sunit Ghosh: "The Way Narasimha Rao Has Passed His First 100 Days Is Noteworthy"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] It is difficult to know how many promises of the election manifesto could have materialized in the first 100 days if Rajiv Gandhi had come to power as the prime minister. But it is noteworthy that without fulfilling many promises, the minority Congress government of Narasimha Rao passed the first 100 days fairly well. The most important aspect of the election manifesto was the pledge of materialization of the 10-point program within first 100 days, which promised to bring down the prices of the essential commodities. After taking charge of the finance department, Manmohan Singh openly declared that those promises could not have materialized without having the magic light of Alladin in hand. He also said that due to the worst economic conditions, he can do nothing to keep those promises. Although this kind of nonpolitical statement of economist Manmohan Singh caused embarrassment to the Congress party, still the honesty of the finance minister undoubtedly influenced the common people. The common people realized the fact that the increase in the price of petroleum products due to the Gulf war is bound to be reflected in all other prices. The sensible ordinary people were not very influenced by the unrealistic promises of Rajiv Gandhi, who made those promises to win the election. So, they accepted the statement of fact from Manmohan Singh and began to get prepared to face reality. The rate of inflation has already exceeded 15 percent and according to the experts, it would reach 18 percent within a few months. But it is difficult to say whether it would remain static after that or not.

In the election manifesto, the commodities promised to have lower prices were diesel, kerosene, salt, cooking oil, cycles and two wheelers, electric bulbs, cotton clothing materials of 40 counts or less, smokeless ovens and stoves, newsprints, post cards, inland letters and postal envelopes. Besides one or two ordinary items, the prices of all other commodities are increasing every day. It is not known here that once prices are increased they would come down again. At the time of increasing the prices of petrol and diesel, the government of V.P. Singh promised that the prices of those two essential fuels would decrease when the Gulf situation was normalized. But the central government forgot this promise although the Gulf War has ended. Moreover, by further increasing the price of petrol and diesel, they indirectly made the way for the price rise in all other commodities. In spite of that, the unhappy people did not much criticize Narasimha government. They, rather, accepted the failure of the government to bring down the prices in such a difficult situation. And this is the greatest success of Narasimha government.

The other important promises were to give more power to the self-governing institutions like the Panchayatraj and Nagarpalika by passing an amendment to the constitution, reservation of 30 percent seats for women in the institutions like Panchayet and Nagarpalika, to maintain same regulations for five years with respect to direct taxes, to give a tax benefit if a portion of profit was invested in the projects for providing drinking water and building houses, roads and schools for the lower- and middle-class people, and increase of the interest for small savings programs. Some other important promises were to create an army of volunteers consisting of people from different religious and ethnic groups to stop riots, to make a law to maintain the status quo with respect to holy places as existed on August 15, 1947, and to establish a corporation for the improvement of the conditions of the backward classes of people.

If we look at the promises of the manifesto, we would see that many of them are not fulfilled. But besides the election manifesto, what the Narasimha Rao government did to save the sinking economy of the nation, which is tied up with the shackle of a 'license-permit system' and overburdened with loans, is undoubtedly revolutionary. Although the time has not yet come to give a final verdict about the new industrial policy, which had been made by compromising the ideas of change with that of continuation, one point must be admitted that in spite of leading a minority government, Narasimha Rao made it clear that he would not care about the criticism of the so-called conservatives or progressives when it was necessary for him to take a firm position.

Making a law to keep status quo in the religious places is also a firm decision, although the matter is undoubtedly a debatable one. The political interest of the Congress party might be linked up with it. The 13 Lok Sava seats out of 17 for which a parliamentary by-election is going to take place within the next two months mostly represents the Muslim majority constituencies. Congress would get a majority in the Lok Sava if it can win these seats. Before the general election, Rajiv Gandhi, after consultation with the Muslim League, decided to maintain the status quo with respect to all religious places except the controversial Babri Mosque. That decision now has become a law. Naturally, the question may be asked why the Narasimha Rao government gave priority to this matter over the other promises. Is it possible to keep status quo in the religious places by making laws? Maybe not. But what else could the government do? There was no other way but to take a legal step to get out of the sick climate of politics of religion in the country, which had been created by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and Vishwa Hindu Parishad through the issue of Ram's birthplace—Babri Mosque—to get the Hindu votes. It is noticeable that for the interest of the party and to keep the support of the orthodox Hindus, the leaders of the BJP opposed the bill, but they did not put pressure on the Parliament. They, instead, walked out of the Lok Sava after registering their verbal protest and in

an indirect way helped Narasimha government to pass the bill. Even with respect to the passage of the finance bill, the BJP did not do anything that might put the government in trouble.

Similarly, on the question of election in Punjab, in spite of opposition from the ally "National Front," a portion of the leftist front came forward to support the government resolution and strengthened the power of Narasimha government. Election was scheduled to take place in Punjab before 26 September, 1991. But the government proposed the extension of the President's Rule for another six months on the ground of deterioration of the law-and-order situation over there and in spite of initial opposition from the leftist front, all the leftist parties except CPI [Communist Party of India] voted in favor of the proposal in the final stage. The leftist parties, which supported the proposal, hoped that during the next six months, it would be possible to get the common people out of the influence of the separatists by taking some new political initiatives and a free and fair election could be held in Punjab with the help and cooperation of all the political parties.

This is the main source of strength of Narasimha government. For the fear of facing a new election, no political party is eager to break this government. As it is important for the government to have support from one or another group in the opposition, simultaneously, as long as BJP would remain as the recognized main opposition party, the so-called secular parties would not go along with BJP to break this government. One such occasion arose when the government decided to donate 2 million rupees for the Rajiv Foundation. After realizing the negative impact of this, the government retreated from its decision to save itself. It is not possible to predict what will happen if such a mistake is made in future. It must also be mentioned here that for his personal behavior, intelligent talks, seniority, experience and an attitude of cooperation and understanding, Narasimha Rao is free from any personal allegation from the opposition parties. Every opposition leader agrees in private that 'Rao is doing a good job' in such a deplorable situation in the country made by the Nehru-Gandhi dynastic rule. The opposition leaders believe that if Narasimha Rao moves with intelligent policy to kiss the friends and foes according to the need and can create balance between the rightist and leftist forces, his government could last for some more years.

Poll Shows High Approval of Narasimha Rao

92AS0208A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA
in English 6 Oct 91 pp 1, 23

[Text] New Delhi, 5 October: The government of Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao appears to have established a fair measure of credibility among the electorate. Some 53 percent of voters think that his performance is either better than expected (20 percent) or as expected (33 percent).

This is revealed in a nationwide TIMES/COFT (Current Opinion and Future Trends) opinion poll conducted between 27 and 30 September. A total of 1,386 people representing a cross-section of the electorate were interviewed in 45 parliamentary constituencies and Delhi. These constituencies were chosen on the basis of past election data.

The approval rating of 53 percent is comparable to the 55 percent approval rating of the V.P. Singh government in August 1990 INDIA TODAY-Marg poll) and 53 percent for the Chandra Shekhar government in February 1991 (Coft poll).

However, there appears to be a distinct regional variation in support. Whereas the ratings for the Narasimha Rao government in the east and the south are 64 percent and 61 percent respectively, they dip to 48 percent in the north and 38 percent in the west.

Also significant is the uneven showing of the government among different communities. The upper-castes are enthusiastic in their endorsement of the government (Brahmins 59 percent, Kshatriyas 49 percent and Vaishyas 57 percent). However, this is not shared by OBC [other backward classes] and SC/ST [scheduled classes/scheduled tribes] voters. Among them, the approval rating falls to 49 percent and 46 percent respectively.

This favourable rating is, however, not translated into a belief that the government will last its full term. Nearly 22 percent believe that the government will only last another year and 29 percent feel that it will survive from anywhere between one and three years. Only 24 percent feel that it will complete its full tenure.

In terms of party preference, the Congress enjoys a high degree of support from Muslims (50 percent) and Christians (67 percent). The Janata Dal [JD] is supported by 25 percent of Muslims.

Among upper caste Hindus, however, the extent of support for the Congress falls. The ruling party is supported by 41 percent of Brahmins, 43 percent of Vaishyas and only 35 percent of Kshatriyas.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] comes second with an average support of 24 percent among the upper castes. The Janata Dal trails behind but has the support of 12 percent of Kshatriyas.

Contrary to popular impression, the Congress has the support of 46 percent of the OBC voters, followed by 19 percent for the JD and 14 percent for the JP [Janata Party]. Among SC/ST voters, the Congress is preferred by 37 percent, the BJP by 17 percent, the JD by 14 percent and the SJP [Samajwadi Janata Party] by 9 percent.

The relative marginalisation of the JD is also reflected in popular perceptions on which party constitutes the real opposition. Some 49 percent of those interviewed felt that the BJP was the real opposition. The JD was seen in

this light by a mere 14 percent. In regional terms, the image of the BJP as the main opposition was highest in the east (59 percent) and west (56), somewhat less pronounced in the north (46 percent) and lowest in the south (38 percent). In the south, in fact, some 28 percent felt that there is no real opposition.

The Narasimha Rao government has secured the endorsement of the electorate in its handling of most issues. Its management of the economy has the approval of 62 percent, including an overwhelming 76 percent in the east. However, the approval dips to 38 percent in the south.

The government is also not in any trouble over its handling of the Punjab and Kashmir problems, the Mandal commission controversy and the Ayodhya problem. Even the sharp devaluation of the rupee, the cancellation of elections in Punjab and the places of worship bill has the approval of 42 percent, 49 percent and 45 percent respectively.

But spiralling prices is the bane of this government. Only 27 percent view its endeavours on this front with favour.

However, even this difficulty is somewhat offset by a widespread recognition, cutting across party lines, that strong measures are justified in view of the present economic crisis. Curiously, the only aberration is the south where only 29 percent view harsh remedies with favour.

The question of restructuring of the economy evokes a very mixed response. There is a general endorsement of any proposal to break the government monopoly over the electronic media, the opening up of the economy to international competition and foreign investment.

However, privatisation is viewed with disfavour. Only 34 percent support a proposal to privatise non-essential public sector units such as Ashok Hotels, Modern Bakeries and Scooters India. In areas such as banking and insurance where the public sector has a monopoly, only 38 percent favour deregulation. The resistance is most pronounced in the east and the south.

It is significant that on economic issues there is a marked difference in the opinions of those from the upper strata on the one hand and the middle and lower stratas on the other. For example, whereas 43 percent from the middle and lower strata approve of devaluation, only 30 percent from the higher strata welcome it. Similarly, privatisation and deregulation are more enthusiastically championed by the more affluent.

The Prime Minister has clearly emerged as a front-runner in the battle of personalities. One-third of the voters identified Mr. Narasimha Rao as being most suitable, among other congress leaders, in taking the nation forward. Among others, 18 percent favoured Ms. Sonia Gandhi, 10 percent Mr. Sharad Pawar, 7 percent Mr. Madhavrao Scindia and 3 percent Mr. Arjun Singh. Some 19 percent of voters had no clear preference. Even

among Congress voters, Mr. Narasimha Rao is the clear favourite of 50 percent, Ms. Gandhi trails with only 20 percent support.

The country also appears to be sharply divided over Ms. Sonia Gandhi's entry into politics, with 45 percent favouring the move and 41 percent opposing it. The most enthusiastic support for Ms. Gandhi's entry into politics comes from the east where 69 percent favour it. But in the rest of the regions, those opposed to her entry outnumber those in favour of it.

Content of Rao-Sharif Harare Talks Reported

92AS0202A Madras THE HINDU in English 19 Oct 91 p 6

[Article K.K. Katyal: "Rao, Sharif Agree To Ease Tensions"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Harare, 18 October—The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao and Mr. Nawaz Sharif on Thursday announced their decision to continue, even invigorate, their efforts to resolve all bilateral issues by peaceful mutual negotiations.

During their meeting here for over an hour, the two leaders covered the entire gamut of Indo-Pakistan relations and, though none of the outstanding problems was taken up, it was agreed to ease tension in the bilateral field. This, they felt, would pave the way for tackling the various issues.

The tendency to describe the meeting as a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations will, however, need to be curbed and the judgement reserved till the promised next round of discussions.

During the Commonwealth summit discussion, Mr. Sharif referred to his "good meeting" with Mr. Rao and gave the assurance that Pakistan would resolve all issues, through peaceful means. He also talked of third party mediation as a way out of stalemate on Indo-Pakistan disputes. Several countries had resolved their problems through conciliation by others and arbitration. Even New Delhi and Islamabad had sorted out the Indus water issue through World Bank arbitration, he said.

The two leaders met without aides. The details of what transpired between them could not be known. Later, they described their encounter as "very good," "friendly" and "cordial."

Three points stood out of their comments. One, they regarded the meeting as a new beginning. Two, they will meet again (though the time and venue were not mentioned). Three, in the meantime the ground will be prepared for making the next round of talks more meaningful.

The foreign secretaries of the two countries are due to meet later this month as part of the ongoing dialogue and on Thursday's meeting could act as positive mandate for them. The prime minister's mutual regard and cordiality

were too conspicuous to be missed. It was a breakfast meeting at the hotel where they are staying.

For 20 minutes or so the two leaders had their ministers and officials with them. Pleasantries were exchanged and the general talk revolved around happenings in their region. Mr. Sharif commended Mr. Rao's presentation at the first session of the summit on Wednesday; particularly the thrust of his argument that democracy had to be seen to deliver and meet the people's aspirations. Mr. Rao explained how he had been trying for support on the basis of consensus through dialogue with political parties of various issues. These informal exchanges created the right mood. The others left at that point.

'A get-acquainted meeting': The two prime ministers replied to correspondents' queries as they emerged from the breakfast room. This, Mr. Rao noted, was their first meeting—a kind of get-acquainted meeting and as such very successful.

"I am sure we have a much better understanding of each other's concerns and it will be much easier for us to interact on various bilateral issue. We have decided that we shall continue our efforts to resolve all bilateral problems by peaceful means," Mr. Rao said.

Mr. Sharif said "We have discussed all the issues which have been there and are still there. At least a beginning has been made. In course of time we will be able to solve problems through bilateral discussions."

Neither Mr. Rao nor Mr. Sharif was prepared to discuss specifics. Did Kashmir figure in the discussions? "All issues were discussed," Mr. Rao said. Asked if there was "any understanding on Kashmir," Mr. Rao said the understanding was that "we shall renew, redouble our efforts to find solutions of all the problems." Any steps agreed upon to reduce tension? "Tension has to be eased and both of us are of the opinion that it should be reduced. That it will pave the way for the resolution of outstanding issues goes without saying. With tension mounting everywhere how could there be talk of resolving issues?"

Any concrete measure in that direction? Mr. Sharif who fielded the question chose to be equally vague—"We both have agreed to continue the dialogue. The talks have been held, a start has been made in a very good atmosphere. He will continue the dialogue in the same spirit." When told that Pakistani's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shaharyar Khan, had expressed similar sentiments in the past. Mr. Sharif said "We will be meeting again and before that we will pave the way for a more meaningful discussion."

Further attempts to draw them out on specifics were of no use. Asked whether Siachen was discussed and when the troops would pullout from there, Mr. Rao said "We did not go into the nitty gritty of any problem. We had no time and did not go into the fine print. We will decide about further modalities." Similarly when Mr. Sharif was asked about Pakistan's "abetment" of terrorism in

Kashmir he chose to be evasive—"Enough has been said by both of us." On that note the question-answer session ended.

The two prime ministers could not have met at a more opportune moment. Of late, a new drift was discernible in the bilateral field and the initiatives of the recent past, feeble as they were, appeared to peter out. Mr. Shaharyar Khan's mission to New Delhi some two months ago as the special envoy of his prime minister seemed to have turned into an exercise in futility. Mr. Kahn had spoken assuringly of his government's anxiety to turn a new leaf in the bilateral area covering not one, not two, but all issues.

The sceptical Indian side, at that time, pointed to the gap between Pakistan's professions and actions. It had in mind the continued help to saboteurs in Kashmir and Punjab, on the one hand and the use by Pakistan of the international fora for anti-India campaigns, on the other. Mr Khan wanted his Indian hosts to look to the future, not to the past, adding that the ground realities would soon reflect Pakistan's desire for positivism.

Two-track approach: New Delhi had since not found any such evidence. On the contrary, it saw a step-up of negative trends. In Kashmir for instance, the infiltration from across the border had increased obviously in anticipation of the closure of passes by the winter snow. This led the officials in Delhi to conclude that Pakistan had perhaps embarked on a two-track approach—sweet reasonableness for the consumption of foreign powers and on the one hand, and increased pressure on India, on the other.

India, too, decided on a two-track response—reciprocity to any desire for peace and amity and tough line in dealing with militancy from across the border. This was the message conveyed by Mr. Rao, while speaking in Parliament towards the end of the last session. This was also the meaning of the intensified action by the security forces in countering infiltration.

UNI reports from New Delhi:

A Britain-based organisation of immigrants from occupied Kashmir has accused Pakistan of misleading its own nationals and the world at large on facts about the accession of Kashmir to India and about its own locus standi in the matter.

The chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Peace Committee, Mr. Anwar Khan, has written a letter to Mr. Nawaz Sharif, with copies to all Pakistani political leaders, accusing Islamabad of exploiting the common man's ignorance of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir and of distorting facts.

He writes that the facts were "very clear" the accession of Kashmir to India was done in accordance with the rules which had been accepted by both the Indian

National Congress and the Muslim League. Subsequently, this accession was approved by the people of Kashmir through their duly-elected Legislative Assembly.

As against this, the position of Pakistan in Kashmir was absolutely untenable, he says.

Narasimha Rao Interviewed by Malayan Papers

*92AS0214A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 1 Oct 91 p 7*

[Text] New Delhi, 30 September (PTI): The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, has indicated that he would leave it entirely to the Janata Dal members to join the Congress or not in the event of the party breaking up, asserting that he did not believe in "engineering defections."

If the Janata Dal was breaking up, would he like the whole or part of it to join the Congress or would he shun them, the Prime Minister was asked in an interview by the MALAYALA MANORAMA and THE WEEK.

"Well, I would leave it entirely to them. I have said many a time before and I repeat it now that I do believe in engineering defections in other parties. Whether the other parties remain whole or get fractured is their internal matter," he told the interviewer, Mr. Philip Mathew.

In reply to a question if the Congress and CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] were coming closer, Mr. Rao said the two parties were working together on many important issues and, "short of merger, short of forsaking our ideology or basic positions, we can always combine," we can always come together to find joint solutions, common solutions to the common problems facing the country."

Responding to another question, the Prime Minister denied that he entered into a deal with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. "They will tell you there has been no deal. Someone said there is a deal and the very next day, within 24 hours, we came up with a bill to which they are tooth and nail opposed.

Stating that the choice to seek by-election from Amethi was entirely left to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the Prime Minister said, "she is already a part of the Congress family and what she has been trying to do is to unite the party. Make the party stronger. This is my summing up of her influence in the party."

Mr. Rao confirmed that he would be contesting Lok Sabha by-election from Nandiyal constituency of Andhra Pradesh. "I would say Nandiyal is a good constituency. I know the area. I know the people of the area. I like the area. So, I have chosen that."

Asked how he was going to tackle the problem of dissidence in Congress ruled states of Andhra Pradesh

and Karnataka and if he would change the chief ministers, Mr. Rao said, the Congress had always had some differences within the party being aired in public openly but this has not really weakened the party, unless this activity went beyond a point.

"The Central Parliamentary Board is seized of this matter and appropriate decisions would have to be taken in due course," he said.

On prices, the Prime Minister said the new harvests coming in October, prices will fall.

He said the most important fact was that the distribution system in the country was not adequate. The Prime Minister said he was calling a meeting of chief ministers regarding this.

About one third of 40 percent of the country, consisting of the most backward areas and backward people was being covered with a new system of public distribution Mr. Rao said, adding that in a fortnight or a month, the contours of this new system would emerge.

Asked if the prices would be under control by the end of this year, the Prime Minister said, "I think so because now there is no particular reason for the prices to go up." He said government expected the prices to stop squaring first and then they might hopefully come down.

Replying to another question, the Prime Minister said, sending the army to Assam has had a very good effect this time and there has been a boost to the morale of the people. He said the way army has acted already has created conditions for easing the panic among the people. "We hope that this process will continue," he said.

Mr. Rao said his political agenda included finding solutions to the burning problems of Punjab, Kashmir, Assam and the problems of the backward classes. "We are tackling each of these problems quietly but firmly."

Asked if the militants get an upper hand in the elections in Punjab will they not create a Baltic state like situation. The Prime Minister said, "I do not think they will get an upper hand in the elections."

Replying to a question if the government has asked the Swedish authorities not to bother too much about the Bofors investigations, the Prime Minister replied, "No, it is not true. I said on the first day I assumed office that the law will take its own course. That is what it has been."

Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, also cautioned Pakistan against fuelling terrorism and doing anything which impinged on India's integrity, "Because, that is something which we can never allow."

Pakistan's response had not been satisfactory so far, Mr. Rao said.

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that Pakistan would not start a conflict, and added: "If that happens, we are ready to retaliate, as you know."

"But we do hope that it will not happen. The irritants between the two countries are creating a situation where the process of bringing about better relations is being impeded," Mr. Rao said.

About his first hundred days in office, Mr. Rao said the going had been "fairly good" though there were some anxious moments. "We are now more or less set for a smooth sailing, comparatively," he observed, adds UNI.

According to him, the issue-based support from the other parties had given a lot of added confidence to those running the government.

He did not think the decisions announced by the government on items like the fertiliser subsidy, pension for ex-servicemen and the Rajiv Gandhi foundation amounted to any "compromise" with the opposition.

Mr. Rao also did not expect the opposition to block his way in the plan to liberalise the economy.

"We have had full discussion on these subjects in Parliament and I have no difficulty on that," he said.

Mr. Rao expressed full confidence about taking the elections in the Congress to their logical conclusion, to the very top of the party.

He said the one-man one-post rule was already in operation in the party, with some exceptions made because of some exigencies. Even at the top, both patterns had been tried in the past, he pointed out.

Similarly, the congress president did not think that meetings like the one organised by young parliamentarians recently were an "embarrassment" to the party. "So long as they are within the family of Congress, so long as they are within the ambit of the Congress, I do not think the Congress is going to suffer as a result of this. Again, there is always a line which one should not cross," he said.

Mr. Rao said that there would be some expansion of the public sector in the eighth plan, the process could not go on forever, given the constraints of resources.

The decision to involve the private sector in a bigger way was not a question of ideology but pragmatism, he said adding that it was the mixed economy which had given India the confidence and the experience to go ahead.

Mr. Rao justified the decision to keep the industry portfolio with himself. "I am keeping it because all these changes need some impetus and timely action and everyone agrees that this has been possible because I have kept it with myself."

About the Orissa chief minister's demand for convening of a constituent assembly, Mr. Rao said the inter-state council was seized of the Sarkaria commission's report on Centre-state relations.

"We do not think that we can think of anything else before the council reports on the report," he observed.

About reports that Colombo had supplied arms to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] during the IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force] operations, Mr. Rao said it was very difficult to think of any action against Sri Lanka. "But I think this should not have been done and we consider it very wrong between neighbours," he remarked.

Replying to some personal questions, Mr. Rao said that he would have probably continued as a lawyer or a writer if he had not entered politics.

He did not attach much significance to the fact that he, like the former prime minister, Mr. V.P. Singh and the Chinese premier, Mr. Li Peng, was an adopted son, "there are only three of us. There are so many others who are not adopted. So how is it that has come to help us," he wondered.

Asked if he turned to God in times of crises, Mr. Rao said, "I turn to God everyday. I do not have to wait for a crisis," he quipped.

Mr. Rao said he would have been just a Rajya Sabha member if he had not become Prime Minister after the last general elections.

"I think that was very clear between me and Rajiv Gandhi. He put me in charge of the election machinery because I told him that I would prefer the Rajya Sabha this time," he said.

About his food preference, he said, "so long as it is vegetarian, I have no great likes and dislikes and considering what I eat, there is not much of a variety possible in even that."

He said he bought toys and books for his grand children and remembered their birthdays. "But beyond that really I do not have much time even for them...we don't meet very often."

Rao Holds Press Conference in Harare
92AS0203A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 19 Oct 91 pp 1, 11

[Article by K.T.R. Menon: "India Will Decide on NPT: PM"]

[Text] Harare, 18 October—The Prime Minister [PM], Mr. Narasimha Rao, declared today that India would take its own decision on signing the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Replying to a question by a Pakistani journalist who pointed out that China had agreed to sign the NPT and

that Pakistan had offered to follow suit if India did so, he said: "India does not believe in emulating any other country. It will take a decision on its own."

Answering another question from another Pakistani correspondent on the "tension in the border areas" and the "danger of even a war" despite the ongoing dialogue between the two countries, the prime minister said: "Troops go on moving from place to place and there is no need for tension to be created or imagined. I am not aware of any such tension."

When the correspondent maintained that the tension had been created by the presence of troops on the Sind border, Mr. Rao said "I am not aware of that aspect at all...in general, I don't see any need for any tension anywhere along the border." Referring to his meeting with the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, he pointed out that it had enabled them to establish a personal rapport. Both were hopeful that it would be possible to redouble efforts to solve the outstanding issues.

Asked about alleged violation of human rights in Kashmir and India's willingness to allow international observers to visit the valley, Mr. Rao said there was no problem as such in allowing access to such observers. "We only have to consider the circumstances in that area from the point of view of security. Requests can be considered on a case-by-case basis."

He asserted that India had an "impeccable human rights record despite some reports. "We have a pulsating democracy, a completely independent judicial system...sometimes there is a clash between the requirements of law and order and unity of the country on the one hand and elements trying to break up the country on the other. On no account they will be tolerated. That is where we draw the line." [quotations marks as published]

Mr. Rao affirmed that he was against linking foreign aid to human rights and such a concept was not going to be accepted by the Commonwealth. "Do you think that if I do not take aid from you, I can do anything with the human rights of my people?" he asked a Canadian journalist who posed the question concerned.

He, however, pointed out that human rights would be an important concern of the commonwealth and this would figure prominently in the Harare declaration being finalised.

Replying to a question at a largely attended news conference at the CHOGM [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting] media centre, the prime minister said efforts were being made to lay down certain criteria for admission or readmission of countries to the Commonwealth. These would be spelt out shortly. It was generally felt that the "ad hoc" approach to this question adopted so far should be abandoned.

Answering a query about the general response to his speech emphasising a "pragmatic approach" to the question of democracy and good governance, he said "it was not negative at all." The term good governance was open to interpretations.

On South Africa, Mr. Rao said "virtually all heads of government" had endorsed the recommendation of the foreign ministers' committee regarding phased withdrawal of sanctions depending on the progress towards dismantling of apartheid. The first step should be removal of restriction on people-to-people contacts.

Asked about possible help to people of Indian origin in South Africa, he said the lifting of the restrictions would set the stage for contacts with them and others and India would see in what way it could help them.

The prime minister said he was fully satisfied that the Commonwealth had taken due note of the global changes in the last two years and the need to set new priorities. Henceforth, it would pay a lot of attention to developing nations and problems of development. Human rights would also figure prominently in its agenda. There would also be a tendency to strengthen the democratic fabric all over the world. "This is going to be the main thrust of the Commonwealth," he said.

About the forthcoming by-elections in India, Mr. Rao said it would not be correct to read too much into their significance. It would, of course, make some difference in the image of the present government, which was "technically a minority government," abroad.

As far as he was concerned, he was determined to adhere to the path of tackling main issues on the basis of a national consensus evolved through consultations among all political parties. This approach had proved fruitful ever since his government came into power. In any case, a government, whether it had a majority or not, would have to follow such a policy in view of the magnitude of the problems involved.

About the references made by the president of Zimbabwe, Mr. Robert Mugabe, to the need for restructuring the United Nations and "misuse" of the world body during the Gulf war, the Prime Minister said the matter did not specifically come up for discussion. However, the question of restructuring was engaging the attention of most countries, specially in view of the increase in membership since it was formed.

PTI adds:

Replying to a query on environment, the prime minister said India has been one of the foremost proponents of environment protection. Years ago the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi had given the lead in the matter and was candid that the issue could not be ignored.

He said in India there was a separate ministry for environment but it was very unpopular since it was acting as an "obstructionist" in the clearance of projects.

In India the issue is sorted out in a way that there the balance between ecology and development is maintained, Mr. Rao added.

Asked whether any new avenue was explored at his meeting with Mr. Nawaz Sharif to settle the Kashmir problem, Mr. Rao said it was his first meeting with the Pakistan Prime Minister and one could not expect much specific business to be concluded.

"We were able to establish a personal rapport and I am hopeful that in time to come we will make redoubled efforts to solve the outstanding problems," Mr Rao said.

Replying to a question he said he would not like to link the result of the 16 November byelections with either acceptance or rejection of his government's policies by the people.

The Premier said he was going for a consensus approach not because his party was short of a few seats but because the problems being faced by the country could be solved only through a consensus cutting across party lines.

He said whenever there have been national problems he had consulted all the major parties and this consensus approach adopted by his government would continue.

The British Prime Minister, Mr. John Major, has announced writing off \$17 billion debt to poorest countries as Britain felt isolated at the Commonwealth summit here for pressing the issues of human rights and democratic reforms and tying them with the question of foreign aid.

Canada immediately extended support to the British move and Australia offered to examine the issue.

Fernandes Resigns From Posts in Janata Dal

92AS0213A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 9 Oct 91
p 9

[Boldface words, quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, 8 October: The on-going power struggle within the Janata Dal has taken yet another twist with the resignation of the senior party leader, Mr. George Fernandes, from all party posts in protest against the alleged derogatory comments of the party general secretary, Mr. Sharad Yadav, against him.

Taking exception to the remarks made by Mr. Yadav in the course of an interview to a weekly magazine, Mr. Fernandes is reported to have submitted his resignation as member of the Political Affairs Committee, National Executive and all other party posts he held, to the party president, Mr. S.R. Bommai, on Monday.

In the interview Mr. Sharad Yadav is quoted by the magazine as having said that Mr. Fernandes, Mr. Ajit Singh, Mr. Rashid Masood, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde and Mr. Biju Patnaik were never sympathetic to the

cause of the backwards. He also indirectly accused them of being agents of the Congress(I).

'Quoted out of context:' Mr. Sharad Yadav, however, has denied the comments attributed to him and has claimed that the magazine had quoted him out of context. He said it was ridiculous to suggest that he held such views against his own party colleagues who were part and parcel of the major decision-making bodies of the Janata Dal.

Mr. Yadav said he had been advocating rapprochement among various factions of the Janata Dal and felt that it was high time that the differences were sorted out in the larger interests of the party and the current political climate in the country. In his opinion an amicable solution could be found only at a joint meeting of the National Executive and the Political Affairs Committee of the party.

Mr. Ajit Singh, who has made no secret of his serious differences with the party leadership, has been quick to seize the opportunity and denounce the interview of Mr. Sharad Yadav as black and white evidence of the whispering campaign against a section of Janata Dal.

'Ridiculous:' In an informal talk with journalists here Mr. Ajit Singh regretted that some of the Janata Dal leaders have been indulging in propaganda against their own colleagues to the effect that they would defect to the Congress(I). "It is ridiculous for any one to suggest that Mr. Fernandes is an agent of the Congress(I)."

In an obvious reference to the reported comments of Mr. Sharad Yadav on the reservation issue vis-a-vis various leaders in his own party, Mr. Ajit Singh wondered what the view of the Janata Dal leader, Mr. V.P. Singh, was on the Mandal Commission when he was in the Congress(I).

'Charges baseless:' Mr. Ajit Singh said people like Mr. Fernandes have been the champions of reservation for backwards and it would be a travesty of truth if any body were to charge him with being an anti-reservationist. He said charges against Janata Dal leaders that they were against backwards was part of the propaganda.

Asked about the progress on the reorganisation of the Janata Dal by the party president, he said there have been consultations but not much progress. On Monday Mr. V.P. Singh had hinted that Mr. Ajit Singh would take over as leader of the Janata Dal Parliamentary Party in a bid to resolve the internal crisis.

Chief Ministers Conference Held in New Delhi

92AS0215A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA in English 6 Oct 91 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, 5 October: The two-day conference of chief ministers concluded here today after setting 31 March as the deadline for the filling of vacant posts reserved for the scheduled castes and tribes and for distributing all the land declared surplus under the land ceiling laws.

It also resolved to launch the revamped public distribution system (PDS) in selected areas on 1 January. Items of mass consumption such as pulses, iodized salt, tea and soap will also be sold at fair price shops.

Devoting bulk of its deliberations considering the growing menace of atrocities against the scheduled castes and tribes, the conference decided that all cases should be handled directly by the chief ministers to ensure effective action. The state governments will identify areas where excesses are more frequent and will take special administrative measures to deal with the situation.

The chief ministers generally shared the concern expressed by the Centre over unabated inflation and mounting government expenditure and agreed to tackle these problems. A suggestion that the emoluments of all political appointees be cut by 10 percent in a bid to curtail government expenditure was readily accepted by all the chief ministers.

The conference could not, however, conduct detailed discussions on two other items on the agenda—updating of land records and the functioning of the co-operative sector. The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, announced that these issues would be considered in the forthcoming meetings of the national development council and the national integration council, where all the chief ministers would be present. These meetings would also review the progress of measures for the implementation of the revamped PDS.

PTI and UNI add that the participants of the chief ministers' conference today took a serious view of the recent caste atrocities and decided to appoint district-level vigilance and monitoring committees.

The vigilance panels, to be headed by district magistrates, will ensure that cases of atrocities against the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are pursued vigorously and brought before the court.

After two days of intensive deliberations, the conference accepted the recommendations of a nine-member sub-committee.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra advised that the contents of the model co-operative law be discussed by the inter-state council before a final view is taken on the matter.

Addressing the chief ministers' conference, the state chief minister, Mr. Sudhakarrao Naik, said it may not be desirable for all the states to have a uniform Co-operative Act because of their different situations.

Significance of CPI-M 14th Congress Examined

92AS0205A Madras THE HINDU in English 17 Oct 91 p 10

[Text] New Delhi, 16 October—The 14th Congress of the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist], to be held in Madras from 3 to 9 January would perhaps be the

most significant gathering of Marxists in recent years and the leadership is approaching it with both optimism and apprehension.

The optimism flows from the party's perception of its place in the political system. It sees itself as having become a viable force which, to quote a senior leader, can be abused, condemned or reviled at but cannot be ignored. The four consecutive electoral victories in West Bengal and a significant, though inconsistent, presence in Kerala and Tripura are viewed as proof of the party's political legitimacy.

A high-power party delegation which visited China recently has come back with the impression that the Chinese Communist Party [CPC] is impressed with the CPI(M)'s performance, especially its major electoral victories against bourgeois parties. It is the party's "resilience" in adapting itself to local conditions without losing its identity that has gone down well with the Chinese, according to CPI(M) leaders. The CPC is said to be keen on studying the Indian experience which, it feels, is in line with its preference for home-spun socialism.

The CPI(M) views itself as in the "vanguard" of the Left within the National Front-Left alliance against the Congress(I) "hegemony" and the threat posed by "communal forces" represented by the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Jamaat-i-Islami and their outfits. The party is worried about the present situation, especially the rise of divisive forces and the electoral legitimacy some of them have acquired lately, and there is a view that it requires a significantly altered tactical response. The congress is expected to see a lively debate on the nature of the response.

The government's economic policies, which the CPI(M) thinks were dictated by the international Monetary Fund and the World Bank, would also be debated and though it is conscious that there is very little it can do to check the economic agenda, the party is determined to do some plain talking.

Mukherjee Death Said Might Affect West Bengal CPI

92AS0204A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 18 Oct 91 p 12

[Article by Sudhin Dey: "Schism in Bengal CPI Deepens"]

[Text] Calcutta, 17 October—The West Bengal CPI [Communist Party of India], which is already sharply divided over the party's assessment on the political developments in the Soviet Union, has been plunged further into an unpredictable situation following the death of the veteran CPI leader, Mr. Biswanath Mukherjee.

Mr. Mukherjee's exit from the state's political scene will, no doubt, weaken the ruling faction of the state CPI led

by the state secretary, Mr. Nandagopal Bhattacharya, who, as is well known, has all along been one of the chief lieutenants of Mr. Mukherjee. Mr. Bhattacharya took up the mantle of the state secretary from Mr. Mukherjee after the latter gave up the post in 1989 because of persistent ill-health. He held the post for 11 years since 1978.

The fact is, the position of Mr. Bhattacharya and his ruling group has now become unenviable in the state party. Already, a minority in the state council and the state executive, the group's position in the state secretariat, where it was holding on to a razor thin majority, has become unpredictable with the death of Mr. Mukherjee.

The nine-member secretariat has now seven members as the vacancies caused by the death of Mr. Kanai Bhowmick and Mr. Mukherjee are not likely to be filled up before the state conference which is likely to be held sometime in March next year. The official groups and its rival faction are evenly divided with three members each with the seventh member, Mr. Prabhat Dasgupta, maintaining an equi-distant position from both the groups.

Informed sources feel, however, that the political significance of Mr. Mukherjee's death is far more important than the effect it would have on the state party's organization. It is on record that ever since the emergency days, Mr. Mukherjee has been a vociferous opponent of the CPI's pro-Congress political line. Though his objections were initially defeated at party forums, the party was compelled to renounce the pro-Congress line after both the Congress and the CPI were trounced in the 1977 Lok Sabha poll.

With the change in the party line, Mr. Mukherjee and his followers, who were against the emergency, were able to capture power in the West Bengal unit in 1978. Since then, Mr. Mukherjee, has been working hard to build a close relationship with the Left Front in West Bengal, particularly with the CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist]. His efforts bore fruit and the CPI was accepted as an ally of the Left Front in the 1982 assembly election and later on was admitted as a partner on the Left Front.

It was, however, found that Mr. Mukherjee in his eagerness to strengthen left unity was turning a blind eye to the failures and aberrations of the Left Front government. Critics inside the state CPI began to say that Mr. Mukherjee was toeing the CPM's line in the name of left unity. As a result, the group, which had opposed the emergency and pro-Congress line led by Mr. Mukherjee, fell apart and a strong rival faction began to challenge Mr. Mukherjee's actions at all state party forums.

The informed circles feel the faction within the CPI, which believes in friendly and constructive criticism of the Left Front's failures instead of toeing the line of the CPM, will become more vociferous to the concern of the official group.

As it is, the relationship between the CPM and the CPI is not that cordial at the national level considering their divergent assessment on the developments in the Soviet Union and also on the possibility of unity between the two parties. Under the circumstances, it will not be a surprise if the group within the state CPI, which is critical of the CPM, emerge victorious in the coming state conference.

Court-Ordered Panel To Monitor Government Litigation

92AS0199A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 12 Oct 91
p 1

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, 11 October—The Supreme Court today directed the Government of India to set up a three-member committee consisting of representatives of the Union Ministry of Industry, the Bureau of Public Enterprises and the Ministry of Law to monitor disputes between one Union Ministry and a public sector undertaking (PSU) and among PSUs themselves. This is to avoid unnecessary litigation and consequent waste of public money and time of public servants.

The Bench consisting of the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Ranganath Misra, Mr. Justice P.B. Sawant and Mr. Justice S. Mohan also said that "no litigation comes to the court or tribunal without the matter first being examined by the Committee and cleared for litigation."

The Bench also directed that "it shall be the obligation of every court and Tribunal where such a dispute is raised or even pending, to demand a clearance from the Committee" and that "in the absence of clearance, proceedings would not be maintainable."

The Bench asked the committee to file quarterly reports to the Court beginning from 1 January 1992.

The Bench gave these directions while dealing with a petition relating to a dispute between the Central Excise Department and the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC)—a public enterprise—over imposition or excise duty for a specified period on 'lean gas,' the residual gas after extraction of LPG from natural gas.

IRAN

Commentary on U.S.-Bahrain Defense Pact

LD2810134191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1053 GMT
28 Oct 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpts] America signed a defense pact with another small country of the region yesterday. According to this pact, America will store weapons in Bahrain, use the port

facilities of that country, and hold joint maneuvers with the country's armed forces. [passage omitted]

America seeks to use this opportunity to the fullest extent, particularly after assuming the leading role during the oil war. Many of the countries of the Persian Gulf basin, despite their vast oil and gas resources, that account for 54 percent of the world's total known oil reserves, have not yet managed to formulate a culture of independent political, economic and sociological expansion for their nations. Due to various reasons, they consider themselves to be in need of an umbrella of support from foreign, especially military, powers. [passage omitted]

The military occupation of Kuwait, its seven-month suppression by the Iraqi Army, produced a golden opportunity for America to implement its long-term objectives. The Desert Shield operation against Iraq was a starting point for many colonialist plots. Unfortunately, many of the Arabs in the region who side with America do not take note of the damage caused by the implementation of those plots.

The current situation in the region shows that a considerable number of Arab governments are suffering from the security vacuum. However, they lack a regional strategy for the foundation of a general security with other countries of the region.

The signatories of the defense pacts between Arab governments and the United States, or any other Western country, announce that those pacts are within the framework of friendly relations. However, according to many political experts, the presence of alien military forces in any region is the starting point for future political and sociological instability. The political and cultural particularities of the Middle East have shown that tranquillity provided by aliens cannot lead to everlasting security.

According to some experts, defense pacts with other countries—such as Britain and France—rather than increasing defense capability, are designed for the creation of balance among those countries who pursue their own varied interests in the region. As it has been said many times before, security is a reality that is achievable when, primarily, there is understanding in the region, when its foundations exist in the various cultural, economic and sociological fields.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has on many occasions announced its concern over the presence of foreign armies in the region. It believes that as the roots of the recent invasions in the region become clear, and as general understanding and agreement is reached on this matter, one must not move in a direction which is contrary to the national interests of the countries of the region. One must reform the previous relations among states.

Ardebili Calls For Attacks Against U.S. Interests*92AS0132B Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL
in English 5 Oct 91 pp 1, 2*

[Text] Tehran, Oct. 4 (IRNA)—A senior cleric today called on Muslims throughout the world, and particularly in the region, to attack U.S. interests wherever they are.

"What has happened to your Islamic zeal? What has happened to your Islamic ambition? Have they (the Americans) come to a cemetery (that you are so silent)?" said Ayatollah Abdolkarim Musavi Ardebili in reference to the U.S. military presence in the region.

"Kuwaitis, Iraqis, Pakistanis, and Iranians should set up resistance cells and endanger their (Americans) interests wherever they are," he asked worshippers who had gathered at the Tehran University campus and nearby streets.

Ayatollah Ardebili said the presence of the United States in the region is "a catastrophe" and so is the world's becoming unipolar and of America's unrivaled assuming of power. He said the U.S.-sponsored peace conference on the Middle East would "sacrifice the Palestinian nation" with the aid of the regional states, "and that is where the depth of the calamity lies."

The prayer leader said it was a "religious duty" for all Muslims to deprive the Americans of security "as they stripped Muslims of security."

Regretting that the United States has brought tension to the region with its so-called peace conference and by deploying its military force in Kuwait's Bubiyan island, and by sending arms there, Ayatollah Ardebili said: "Had the Muslims of Hijaz (Saudi Arabia) killed ten American soldiers every day (during their presence there in the course of the Persian Gulf war), they would not have dared to come to Kuwait now."

He also said that the Sabah clan in Saudi Arabia were mercenaries and are justified in bowing to the United States as their savior against Iraq's Saddam Husayn. The Americans want their wage now that the Persian Gulf war is over, he said. No one should expect the Saudi ruler not to attend U.S.-engineered peace conferences or not to forge agreements with Washington. "He is a mercenary, a servant anyway," he said.

Ardebili said being a Muslim was not confined to saying prayers four times a day. "You are responsible. Go and make life bitter for them."

"We are not able to engage in a classic war with them but we can at least do this (attacking their interests). And whoever is killed in this path is certainly a martyr. We cannot remain silent, never. The ardent Muslim youths with experience in this field, should form resistance cells and attack their lives, properties and interests. Deprive them of peace and tranquility and rest assured that they will be the victors."

Arab, Israel Peace Conference Viewed*92AS0178F Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL
in English 19 Oct 91 p 2*

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] There exists a negative but unmistakable parallel between the American civil rights movement and the question of the liberation of Palestine. Both situations have created virtually insular industries. And neither of those industries is at all truly relevant to the social conditions that spawned them.

Thus in America the "spokesmen" you hear on behalf of that nation's 30m blacks, aside from complexion, share very little in common with those they supposedly represent in terms of lifestyle, opportunity and aspiration. By an overwhelming percentage, those who speak for Afro-America are physically far removed from the social cancers eating into the inner cities' ghettos.

The misery of the Palestinians has generated a similar malaise among those who "speak for Palestine." These people circle the globe, talk and write volumes and usually enjoy a standard of living that would be envied or at least considered respectable by most in the West.

One curious thing though about the Palestinian conundrum is that outside Palestine proper, over the past 25 years, Palestinian organizations and ordinary civilians have been more heavily targeted by other Arab states for imprisonment or death by Arab governments, be they royal or military, (Jordan and Iraq to name only two) than they have been by the Zionist regime. This is interesting.

Palestine has been reduced to discussion and blatant persecution of Palestinians by other Arabs. Whereas if the liberation of Palestine is to come about, lectures and gatherings will have almost nothing to do with it.

The 'intefada' [as published] stands as proof of this. It began in the West bank and Gaza Strip in Dec. 1987, solely with the will and determination of the indigenous, oppressed Palestinians. Since then a number of Palestinian organizations, Arab and non-Arab states have been trying to co-opt the movement or falsely claim to be the inspiration for its inception.

The lesson to be taken is that Palestine will be liberated through the efforts of ordinary Muslims gathered from worldwide and dedicated to that purpose. They will be an international network and the head of this movement will not be a head of state. Unfortunately, heads of state have been the biggest drawback to the liberation of Palestine to date.

Here we ask a question of the organizers of the Palestine conference convening in Tehran today and sound a warning to the Palestinian and Lebanese mujahideen who will be in attendance. For the Iranian officials

involved, they should tell us what the conference secretariat has tangibly accomplished from last year's conference to the present one.

For the mujahideen, we ask that they not get in the habit of staying in five-star hotels and travelling to conferences. And with the talk of an intefada fund being established, we suggest the Palestinian mujahideen recall that their Afghan counterparts say they have been lucky if they received 50 percent of the donations in cash and kind earmarked for their struggle.

In real terms, a much more relevant venue for the conference than Tehran would be the south of Lebanon, in clear view of Israeli occupation forces there. This would add a touch of the reality the Palestinians face everyday.

Many of the conferees would no doubt quail at travelling there. Too dangerous! Now, remember that the Israeli political leadership both moderate and hard-line, is composed of some of the world's most successful terrorist organization leaders and military commanders the world has seen this century. Also keep in mind that every Israeli citizen is bound by law to a yearly stint of military service till the age of 55. Surely, conferences are no match for a well-organized, militaristic and pragmatic set-up like that.

Economic Contacts With Europe, Japan Viewed

92AS0146A Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 14 Oct 91
pp 38, 39

[Article: "Stimulating the Iranian Economy First Item on President's Agenda"]

[Text] Tehran, AL-SHIRA' exclusive—In Esfahan Province last week, Iran dedicated the Mobarakeh steel complex, which will produce 2.4 million tons in its first phase. The dedication ceremony was attended by Italy's minister of foreign trade, Vito Lattanzio, as well as by the head of the Institute for Modernizing Italian Industries, Franco [Numbali].

The factory occupies a site of 35 square km. The metal plates it produces can be used in oil pipes and liquid gas trucks, and for other uses in industry and transportation. To date, 89 percent of the complex has been completed with the participation of an Italian firm that has invested 630 billion Iranian riyals. Iranian officials expect increased production in this complex to bring the country to the stage of self-reliance in this sensitive industrial area if the trend of increased production in the other parallel complexes moves in the same way. This was stated by the minister of mines and metals, Mohammad Hoseyn Mahlujchi, in his review of the country's achievements in this field. He added that the production of another steel complex in Esfahan would bring the area's current production of 1.32 million tons to 2 million tons. The production of another complex in Ahvaz in southern Iran would increase to 600,000 tons by March of next year. It should be mentioned that the

country's current production of steel is 3 million tons. The efforts underway aim at raising it to 7 million tons by 1995, the end of the government's five-year plan.

Visit Postponed

Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti was supposed to attend the opening ceremony for the complex, but certain pressure groups in Europe and pressure from the Bush administration prevented the high Italian official from attending, and led to the postponement of his visit to another time to be set in consultation between the Italian and Iranian capitals, as the media in both countries have announced. The chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Italian Senate is known to have announced his rejection of a visit by the Italian official at this particular time in light of "extreme fundamentalist" statements emanating from Iran's foreign minister and the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran concerning the political situation in North Africa—according to the Italian parliamentarian. This shows the pressures that have been exerted by certain European parties that do not want a rapid normalization of relations with Iran and want to obtain more concessions from the Iranian Government on the well-known points of difference between the two sides.

The same thing is now with regarding French President Francois Mitterrand's expected visit to Tehran. Some French parties and groups are pressuring for a postponement or even cancellation of the visit. Other parties, particularly economic ones, think that creating renewed tension in Franco-Iranian relations because of the Bakhtiyar murder can only harm French investment projects in the Iranian market, inasmuch as the other European countries and Japan will find a ready opportunity to win these investment projects at the expense of French industries and capital. That is why France's ambassador in Tehran has been roving constantly around the Iranian capital in the last few weeks, holding intensive meetings with a number of Iranian political and economic officials to stress to them his country's commitment to all the projects agreed upon with Iran and its readiness to enter into new projects in the fields of energy, transportation, dams, and other Iranian development projects.

European effort generally is being directed now toward obtaining vital projects in strategic areas of Iran in order to enter into European-European and European-American competition. It should be noted in this context that the Italian firm Progetti e Lavori obtained a \$37 million contract this July to drill three wells in the world's largest gas field, which is located in the middle of the Gulf, in Iran's part of the joint Iranian-Qatari field. The field's gas reserve is estimated at 14 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Iran says that it owns at least 30 percent of this and calls its section "South Fars."

Qatar is known to have begun drilling in its "North Field" this August in view of figures that indicate possible exhaustion of the Gulf emirate's gas reserve by

the beginning of the next century. Observers believe that Iran is now pressing to get Qatar's approval for joint investment for the field to lighten the burden on Iranian investments.

In a related development: Against the background of Japanese-European competition in the field of industry and trade in the Iranian market and the Rafsanjani Government's economic policy of exploiting all possible opportunities to transfer Western technology to Iran and reinvigorate the industrial sector at strategic Iranian sites, Tehran was engaged last week in very important talks with Japan's largest economic-industrial organization, Keidanren, which includes Japan's most important firms and conglomerates. The organization is considered a fundamental Japanese economic and industrial decisionmaker and one of the organizations that influences the decisions of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). It includes 121 industrial organizations and 877 major firms. The goal was to reach long-term investment contracts for Iran's Qeshm Island in the Gulf.

The large Japanese delegation representing this industrial-trade complex arrived in Iran on 29 September and made a long visit to the island for an on-site view of available opportunities. They listened to Iranian experts on the technical data available to them about projects that could be established there in the context of the government's five-year plan. The island, which is 136 km long and 20 km wide, lies in the middle of the Strait of Hormuz, the sole passage for thousands of oil tankers. Its south coast has the Gulf region's deepest natural harbors. The island could, therefore, provide the services that ships require, regardless of their size or weight. Every ship or freighter entering or leaving the Gulf passes parallel to the island. This means that any economic activity to be established on it will be easily reached. No harbor or port in the entire Gulf can offer such natural characteristics or advantages.

Iran recently declared Qeshm Island a free industrial and trade zone and named a high official to be in charge of it, Assistant Minister of Mines and Metals 'Ali Shams-Ardekani. As head of this industrial zone, he will work under the immediate supervision of the president. Shams-Ardekani says that the free trade zone's projects will rely on the island's huge reserves of natural gas—the cleanest source of energy. The complex will thus become among the world's cleanest industrial complexes and will provide 20,000 jobs for Iranian workers in the next 10 years. With its projects, the island will represent the biggest competitor of such internationally famous free trade zones, such as Singapore or the Jabal 'Ali zone in the UAE. The Iranian official announced this when he received the large Japanese delegation. He ended his speech by saying, "If we look at the island today in comparison with Jabal 'Ali, for example, we find it backward. But history tells us that Qeshm Island has often been a center of culture, while the opposite shores were poor and barren."

Club of Influential Countries

Iran's President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is striving to rebuild what the war destroyed, and bring Iran into the club of countries with influence in creating the foundations of the new world that is being reshaped after the important changes of the early nineties, summarized his government's economic views when he opened the 17th Tehran International Exhibition this year. "This exhibition," he said, "reflects a unique leap forward." Its being held in this form "shows the ability and will of the Iranian people in efforts to rebuild." It represents a disappointment "for all who dreamt of seeing Iran destroyed by the war that was imposed and by the economic blockade." He added: "Attempts by enemies of the revolution to force isolation on Iran have ended in failure." Pointing to the economic and industrial growth the country is witnessing, he stated that his country "is still walking with its head held high on the road to establishing peace and security in the region."

In fact, 46 countries, representing almost all the world's industrial countries except the United States, participated in this year's Tehran Exhibition. The countries of southeast Asia were well and heavily represented because of the ongoing struggle with Western countries over the promising Iranian market. The Iranian capital saw the arrival of a large number of official delegations to participate in the exhibition. In addition to the Omani minister of state, the Kuwaiti minister of industry and trade, a minister from Bahrain, and the Romanian minister of industry; the presence of major Canadian, European, and Japanese industrial companies was a large economic and trade demonstration reflecting the desire of the Iranian president and his government for an economic opening to the world, despite Western hesitation about a political opening to Tehran.

Soviet Islamic Republics, Afghan Issue Viewed

92AS0145A *Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic* 7 Oct 91
pp 34, 35

[Article: "Breakup of 'The Little Satan' Feared"]

[Text] Tehran, AL-SHIRA' exclusive—Continued recent developments in the Soviet Union have added new worries for Iran's foreign policy makers in the decade after the cold war and the dissolution of the socialist camp. The whole world, and the Arab and Islamic world in particular, attentively followed Iran's behavior during the second Gulf war. The war was a thorny test for the political and spiritual leaders who succeeded the founder of the Islamic republic. It confronted them with basic, pivotal problems in their political thinking and in their strategic dealings with their neighbors, their emotional and ideological environment, and their professed enemy, "The Great Satan." One can say without exaggeration that despite broad disappointment on the part of partisans and zealots, the test has passed with the least possible damage in the eyes of Iranian officials. The latter thought, and still think, that the main target of the

oil war was Iran and that the Islamic revival, since Shaykh Rafsanjani's government took over a destroyed country able to worry only about methods, means, and programs to rescue the ruined economy from the depth to which it had sunk. Restoring normal and sound relations with the countries of the world, therefore, goes hand in hand with encouraging trade and economic exchange in an attempt to make up for lost time and move the country out of a bottleneck.

Neighbor's Problems

To this complex situation, the recent attempted coup in the great northern neighbor has added new distractions no smaller than those that preceded it. Signs that the union is breaking up have appeared, bringing the danger of ethnic conflicts and instability, and opening up much uncertainty. Although Imam Khomeini considered the Soviet Union "the little satan" and thought that the objectives of the communist ideology and system were historically and culturally exhausted, it was clear that he dealt differently with it than with the United States. This led to a shift from hostility and wariness to cooperation that began modestly and gradually broadened to the areas of transportation, mines, and agriculture, finally reaching the military area. For example, Iran purchased Sukhoi and MiG-29 aircraft to strengthen its air capabilities.

The Iranian president's visit to Moscow shortly after assuming office was another indicator of the importance of relations between the countries. It was an attempt to emerge from the economic, technological, and industrial blockade that America wants to prolong as long as possible. At the same time, relations were strengthened with the Muslim republics in the south of the Soviet Union. There was a marked increase in the level of cultural exchanges in the form of book exhibits and art, music, and cinema festivals. Economic exhibits were opened in the capitals of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and elsewhere. Iranian products other than oil were exhibited, and all received unusual interest from the people of these republics. New railroad lines, highways, border posts, and scheduled flights were opened to facilitate trade and the movement of people on both sides. Recent months have seen numerous visits to Tehran by important delegations led by republic presidents or high officials, crowned by important agreements in various areas.

It was not odd that the coup against President Gorbachev took place while President Muttalibov of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan was on an official visit to Iran, heading an important delegation to "develop cooperation in the fields of energy, railroads, and trade and technical links" and "implement the economic cooperation agreements signed during the visit of the prime minister of Azerbaijan." The president of Azerbaijan called for cooperation with his republic to "exploit natural resources in his country," because his country lacked the skill and experience needed to exploit these resources. Although Iranian officials were embarrassed

by his statements supporting change and attacking President Gorbachev's policy, the official Iranian position handled the question very cautiously and issued nothing that could be interpreted as hesitation or backing. There were, however, a few newspaper articles or statements expressing private or personal viewpoints worried about how the international balance was being shaken in favor of "the fiercest enemy," the "fundamental ally" of the Zionist foe, and "constant plotter" against the Iranian Islamic revolution.

Apprehension and Fears

One can see the great apprehension or preoccupation shown by media and political circles over events in the Muslim republics—the yearning for independence from the center, the attempt to break up the party and ideological structures, and the conflict characterized by fury exceeding what we are witnessing in the "European" republics and reminding us generally of confrontations between one-party repressive governments in Third World countries and their peoples. Against this background, repeated editorials and analyses in the major Iranian newspapers have called on officials throughout the Islamic world to wake up, catch up with the decisive changes in the republics of the Soviet Union, quickly recognize the independence of the Muslim republics, and send high officials to visit them, consult with their leaders, and strengthen economic and trade cooperation with them. The TEHRAN TIMES went so far as to "invite the presidents of the Islamic republics to meet in Tehran" and "put aside their differences and take a united stand about ongoing events in the Soviet Union" (editorial, 2 August 1991). This was when independence announcements began arriving from the various republics. In this regard, the newspaper JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI has been distinguished by its continuous coverage of events. It has frequently warned about suspicious moves by international and regional figures to strengthen their future positions, such as American Secretary of State Baker's visit to Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, the largest Muslim republic, and his talks with the republic's president on economic matters and future relations. It called attention to the opening of an EL AL air route to several of the capitals of the Muslim republics and the imminent establishment of relations with them to speed the emigration of their remaining Jews to Israel. The newspaper considered Iran's national security to be closely tied to the situation on the northern borders. It implicitly criticized slowness and vacillation by officials in taking a stand and recognizing the independence of the Muslim republics like that of the three Baltic republics. However, despite President Rafsanjani's insistence that it would be difficult for Iran to accept any distinction between Soviet republics, the National Security Council stated that "Iran will honor any agreement that the central government in Moscow reaches with the republics in the Soviet Union." It announced "the Islamic republic's readiness to help and aid the Soviet republics in the political, economic, and cultural fields on the basis of mutual respect and good,

neighborly relations." This balanced and cautious official position in dealing with the subject aims at maintaining the greatest possibilities for successfully benefiting from future changes in the structure of the Soviet Union and Soviet republics in general, and the Muslim republics in particular. It aims at avoiding any move or statement that could be interpreted as interference in internal affairs or as an attempt to influence events there. Soviet leaders responded positively to this "greeting" during Primakov's visit to Tehran last week during his Middle East tour. During his meeting with the Iranian president, the Soviet envoy called on Iran to play "an important role in solving the Soviet Union's economic problems." A swift response was visible in the agreement reached between the Soviet delegation and Economy and Finance Minister Mohsen Nurbakhsh to pay hard currency for all trade between the two sides, including the natural gas exported from Iran to the Soviet Union and the projects now being implemented in Iran by Soviet firms.

Although this step is not especially welcome by Iran, which used to operate on a barter system because of its shortage of hard currency, it fits the previously-established direction of Iranian policy toward ongoing developments in the great powers. Iran does not want the Western countries "to reap benefits or unjustified concessions from the worsening situation in the Soviet Union" and is doing all it can, despite the burdens of the reconstruction period, "to offer all possible assistance to solve economic problems" as a necessary gateway to maintaining the level of good relations between the two countries and saving whatever gains and benefits can be saved in the vastness of a world developing toward a "new world order," whose formation is still moving from one shock to another. Perhaps Iran still hopes that, despite all the difficulties and challenges, the remaining republics, or most of them, will at least arrive at the creation of a new system with a formula acceptable to all. The stability of such a system would solidify and increase areas of cooperation and would make Western and American pressure less determinative of the directions of Soviet policy, which has come to appear to observers in Tehran as "oriented toward the West," if not "subservient" to the West, on a number of sensitive issues, such as the peace conference and disarmament in the Middle East.

Afghan Issue

Iran has begun to coordinate with the Soviet Union to resolve another complex issue, the Afghan issue, as soon as possible in the context of defusing tension in the region and closing the files inherited from the period of revolutionary ferment, such as the hostage issue. Recent months have witnessed three-party talks—four-party, according to some Afghan mujahidin factions—between Sunni mujahidin located in Peshawar, the Pakistani government, Shiite mujahidin located in Tehran, and the Iranian Government. These talks have led to something of a recognition of the value of the UN secretary general's five-point plan, with Najibullah to be excluded

from any negotiations. This was crowned by an announcement by America and Russia that weapons supplies to the rival parties would be stopped as of 1 January. This opens a broad field for pressuring all sides to get the situation moving. The Soviet government's recent invitation to a delegation of Afghan mujahidin to visit Moscow for talks with officials is part of this.

Observers in the Iranian capital viewed with interest the special invitation that the Soviet ambassador in Tehran extended to an official of the Islamic Unity Party in Tehran, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mortazavi. This party draws together all the Shi'ite factions. The ambassador and Mortazavi met at the headquarters of the party's political bureau on 23 September. The meeting can be explained by Russian desire to incorporate all the parties into the Moscow discussions and to achieve lasting stability in Afghanistan. This coincides with the desires of Pakistan and Iran, which, like Moscow, want to ease the burden of Afghanistan and turn their attention to economic priorities that weigh heavily on everyone. The coming negotiations in Moscow are therefore considered important because they could lay foundations for a Soviet understanding with the Afghan mujahidin about the country's future and relations with neighbors. This could hasten the lifting of support from the Kabul regime, now that it has lost its ideological supporters in the government apparatus.

Developments and changes thus continue along Iran's northern borders to varying degrees. Following the independence of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the time has begun to approach for Turkmenistan to announce its independence. The petrified forces surviving from the old regime have begun desperately defending their privileges and local positions. This is now happening in Tajikistan, whose parliament has canceled a decree by President Qadrudin Aslunov dissolving the Communist Party in the republic and confiscating its property, has proclaimed a state of emergency until the end of the year, and has stationed troops to protect the remaining statues of Lenin, in a move counter to history.

Will the Soviet Union break apart into independent states united in certain economic and security agreements, or will there be the usual double standard—full independence supported by the international community and basically by the West for the European republics, as has happened with the Baltic states, preliminary to building the European home, while [the other republics] are linked by special treaties with Federated Russia after being disarmed and left to flounder in their economic, ethnic, and border problems, particularly since their political leaders are among the most extreme, closed-minded, and backward communists? How will these labor pains affect the situation in Iran, particularly since the West knows how to play skillfully on ethnic questions and separatist longings to weaken "offenders" and distract them from any real achievement?

The coming days are likely to clarify some cues to the answer. Stability in this region bordering the Middle East remains a basic condition for building the new international order—in which America is going to devote itself exclusively to extinguishing local conflicts and assuaging points of tension in the world!

Malaysia To Cooperate in Construction of Rail Traverse

92AS0125C Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 2 Oct 91
p 4

[Text] Kuala Lumpur—ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY—A consortium of private Malaysian companies under the direction of that nation's wood industries is cooperating with Iran in a project to build 200,000 railroad ties annually.

Tangkou Mahmoud, deputy prime minister of Malaysia, who went to Iran and other Middle Eastern nations early last month along with a trade delegation, discussed this matter at a press conference. He said: Iranian officials gave preference to the Malaysian wood industry for participation in this project.

He added: If a contract is signed between Iran and Malaysia, we will try, in cooperation with a consortium of private Malaysian companies, to deliver 200,000 railroad ties to Iran within six to nine months.

Tangkou Mahmoud added that the Malaysian wood industry is working with many companies in the Middle East active in the wood industry for the purpose of increasing quickly as possible the stockpiles of wood for distribution. Dubayy, Jiddah, and Istanbul will cooperate.

He said: The Malaysian wood industry has only 2 percent of the Middle Eastern wood market, while Canada meets 20 to 40 percent of this market's needs.

He added: Malaysia intends to increase the amount of its annual export wood sales in the Middle East to \$200 million.

Middle East Water Shortage Viewed

92AS0178E Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL
in English 14 Oct 91 p 2

[Text] Oil and its various conflagrations have become synonymous with the Middle East. But another resource (or more aptly phrased a non-resource) is clamoring for a prominent place on the political agendas of countries in the region—water.

The Middle East is approaching dangerous water shortages and levels of contamination. As early as the 1980s, a majority of the countries identified as sliding into the perilous zone, where all available fresh surface and ground water supplies will be utilized, were in the area i.e., Jordan, Israel, and the countries of the Arabian peninsula. They are already facing a "water barrier"

requiring accelerated efforts, investments, regulations and controls in order to keep pace with spiraling populations.

Water consumption for all uses is increasingly less than available water; fresh water is rapidly dwindling. Consequently, this resource is proving so very costly in places where it is most needed, that there is now a dire necessity for dramatic improvements in the management of existing water facilities.

The Mideast is reported to have the highest median cost of water supply and sanitation in the world, with capital costs reaching a median of over \$300 per capita. Given a population growth averaging 3 percent yearly, the region is hard-pressed to expand water sources at such exorbitant prices.

The growing water shortages and contamination have almost brought countries to loggerheads. In 1975 Iraq and Syria came to the brink of war over the flow of the Euphrates to the Al-Thawrah Dam. Tensions between Turkey and Syria also ensued over the Ataturk Dam which the latter views as a threat to its farmers. In 1987 Ankara allegedly hinted at a cut to the flow of the Euphrates' water to Syria over Syrian support for Kurdish rebels, an enduring source of conflict between the two countries. In 1990, Jordan, which shares water resources with Israel, suggested that water disputes could lead to armed confrontation when the Israelis refused to give their nod to the Wahda Dam which the Jordan valley and other urban complexes sorely needed.

Clearly, water security will soon rank with military security. Most countries of the region are linked to one another by common aquifers subject to overwithdrawal or overcontamination. Moreover, Persian Gulf countries, most notably Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, feel vulnerable as they are almost totally dependent for their fresh water supply on desalinization plants which could easily be targets of aggression.

Yet, while leaders are acutely conscious of potential for conflict stemming from chronic water shortages, the problem has never been adequately addressed. The Middle East water summit supposed to be hosted by Turkey next month was shelved at the instigation of the United States, who wants to focus attention on the bogus "peace" conference. Washington is likewise threatening to boycott the conference over the non-inclusion of Israel.

The fact remains however that whatever peace is hoped to be gained at the moment, will only be doomed in the future if the complacent approach to the Middle East water scarcity persists. The most concerned international players could well find themselves walking a political tightrope, leagues above the rivers and seas, with little expectation of a safety net.

Majles Elections Slated for 10 Apr

LD2710115491 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 27 Oct 91

[Text] The elections for the fourth term of the Islamic Consultative Majles will be held on Friday, 10 April 1992, throughout the country.

The Interior Ministry issued a statement announcing that candidates for Islamic Consultative Majles deputy can register their names at election centers in their constituencies during office hours during the seven-day period 11-17 March 1992.

Meanwhile on the basis of the first clause of Article 31 of the Majles election law, the president and his advisers, ministers, and their deputies and their advisers, members of the Council of Guardians, the head of the Administrative Justice Courts, the head of the National Control and Inspection Organization, and the employees of the Armed Forces, are barred from candidacy at constituencies throughout the country, unless they resign their post two months before application and do not continue to work in that post.

Also, on the basis of the second clause of the above-mentioned article, permanent Friday imams, prosecutors, assistant prosecutors, judges, governors-general, their advisers and deputies, director generals, supervisors of the main departments, governors, district heads, supervisors of the Islamic Propagation Organization and Construction Jihad bureaus throughout the country, managers of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic are also barred from candidacy at the constituency where they work, unless they resign their post two months prior to application and do not continue their work under any condition.

Also concerning those whose resignation, according to employment rules and regulations or conditions of service, depends on its acceptance by the concerned officials, then the acceptance of their resignation shall be the precondition.

Majles Passes Bill on Disclosure of High Officials' Assets

LD2910193491 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 29 Oct 91

[Excerpt] The draft-bill on the manner of supervising reductions in unnecessary expenditure and preventing spendings on luxury [tajamol-gera'i] was passed by the deputies in today's open session of the Islamic Majles.

According to our correspondent, on the basis of one of the clauses of this draft-bill—in order to implement Article 142 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and prevent any potential misuse and abuse of that Article—the authorities mentioned in that article and also the Islamic Majles deputies; the members of the

Council of Guardians; the head of the Judicial Branch; the state prosecutor general; the heads of the State Supreme Court; the heads of the Administrative Justice Court and Accounts and Audits Court and big organizations affiliated to the Executive and Judicial Branches; officials in charge of revolutionary establishments; commanders of the three arms of the Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps; commander of the Law Enforcement Forces; managing-directors of big state-owned companies or companies affiliated to revolutionary establishments; governors-general; heads of the Ministry of justice; the judges of the State Supreme Court; deputy-ministers; mayors of provincial capitals and big cities and those employees who hold sensitive financial and administrative jobs—all are duty bound to prepare a list of their assets and wealth before accepting their responsibilities and must present this to the head of the Judicial Branch so that it may be attended to by the State Supreme Court. In the event that the wealth has increased in an unauthorized, abnormal, and illegal manner, in addition to returning it to its rightful owners or to the Treasury, the cases of offense will be attended to in accordance with the current laws of the country and the results will be made public as appropriate.

Also, in accordance with this draft bill, the mass media are duty bound to prepare their program in such a way that they will not promote the luxury-desiring culture. [passage omitted]

Revised Executive, Administrative Systems Needed

92AS0178A Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 12 Oct 91 p 2

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Arak, Central Prov. (IRNA)—First Vice-President Hassan Habibi Thursday urged a revision in the prevailing executive and administrative systems in the country.

Habibi, here to inaugurate the first phase of a plan to expand the 'Eko' factory for the manufacture of heavy construction machineries, noted that the pre-revolution executive and administrative regulations were not responsive to the needs of the post war period, especially in the reconstruction era.

He warned against irregular employment of computer machines in various sectors and stressed that it would cause the country [to] face numerous problems in the next decade.

Pointing to the expanded socio-economic projects in the country, Habibi called for employment of specialized and skilled manpower and the further strengthening of higher education institutions.

Commentary Views UN Human Rights Record

92AS0132C Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL
in English 1 Oct 91 p 2

[Text] Austria proposed in New York last week the establishment of the "White Helmets," a special group of United Nations experts to be charged with carrying out on-the-spot investigations of grave human rights abuses.

"Violations of human rights, wherever they occur, must not be tolerated," Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock told the U.S. General Assembly, adding that "the United Nations ought to have the possibility to quickly react to serious human rights abuses and prevent their escalation."

Human rights, or the lack of them, have increasingly hugged the political limelight. With the mushrooming of organizations espousing this issue and the sharpening of people's political awareness, human rights have become a potent instrument in international politics.

Despite this heightened consciousness however, the violations and atrocities committed have not been minimized, much less halted. Ironically, the crimes against human rights have even been on the upsurge.

It is quite apparent that the existence of international organizations who advocate non-violence, fight against torture, protest against the practice of letting politically "unpopular persons" disappear or against the officially-sanctioned killing of members of opposition groups or against the persecution of political refugees, etc., is not a guarantee of putting a halt to such atrocities.

Reports of almost all organizations keeping track of human rights abuses have published country reports which get thicker year after year and read like encyclopedias of the darker side of this world. And no country, from the richest to the poorest, from dictatorships to democracies, with their larger or lesser shortcomings is a non-violator.

The fact is that the widespread support which governments profess for this question is merely lip service. Countries which raise the banner of liberty, democracy, and human rights are themselves perpetrators of the most horrid violations. Former American President Jimmy Carter made human rights a central plank in his dealings with the world and then supported Saddam Husayn's invasion of Iran. Iraq's Western supported aggression was to be the catalyst for Kuwait's invasion by Iraq. There was also a reference on human rights to justify that latest war in the Persian Gulf; now the "violated" at Sabah family is making a name for itself in the annals of rights violations.

Ours has become a world of skewed priorities, where power and profit have become the end all and be all, to be obtained at whatever cost to citizens. The saddest part is that the United Nations, supposedly the primary exponent of individuals' rights and the upholder of

international law and order, has let itself slide into being merely an instrument of manipulation by an ambitious few.

The most visible examples of disregard for human rights have been U.N.-sanctioned, foremost of which is the forced partition of Palestine. In the growing social, economic, and environmental impoverishment in the countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, the United Nations meekly looks on, impotent. Death squads in El Salvador, "desaparecidos" in Argentina, the Rohingyans and Arahans of Burma (Myanmar), the unresolved conflict in Kashmir...

In Eritrea, the United Nations is accused of condoning the use of famine as a strategy of repression, turning a blind eye to the diversion of food aid in the 1984 famine, endorsing untrue government claims, failing to object to resettlement, and directing aid only to one side.

And now, during this ongoing 40th session of the General Assembly, several Western countries have urged the United Nations, despite its dismal track record, to take the right of intervention into countries' internal affairs, under the pretext of "securing protection of human rights and respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence." All this is prelude to the new world order.

Diplomats split hairs over so many issues, trade, disarmament, political alliances, etc., but have consistently missed a far more important point. Human rights violations have given rise to more dead, more homeless and more human misery. The world should brace for the greatest irony—far more dead, far more homeless, far more misery—all in the name of human rights.

IDB To Help Finance Agro-Industrial Projects

92AS0132A Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL
in English 1 Oct 91 p 1

[Text] Tehran, Sept. 30 (IRNA)—The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is to help Iran implement some agro-industrial projects and also build a field hospital for Iraqi Kurdish refugees.

The bank would provide \$18.2m in credit facilities for a sugarcane project which includes seven separate plants for the production of sugar, pulp and animal fodder. The repayment of the loan with an interest rate of 6.8 percent is to start after the units become fully operational.

IDB would further give \$12m for a white cement plant in Saveh, south-west Tehran, that should be repaid within 10 years with an interest rate of 7.3 percent.

The Jeddah-based bank has also agreed to grant \$1.2m to Iran's Red Crescent Society for the establishing of a field hospital and for the purpose of purchasing its needed equipment.

The 44-member bank has granted \$86 [as published] in loans to its member states since its establishment in 1975.

Publishers Barred From Frankfurt Book Exposition

92AS0125E Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 30 Sep 21
p 3

[Text] Tehran-ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY—German publishers will be prevented from attending the Tehran International Book Exposition.

This decision was made by the chief of the Tehran International Book Exposition after officials of the Frankfurt Book Exposition blocked attendance by Iranian publishers at that exposition.

Mr. Sabah Zanganeh, deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for cultural affairs and chief of the Tehran International Book Exposition, discussed this subject in an exclusive interview with the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY. He said the banning of Iranian publishers from the Frankfurt Book Exposition was a clear violation of the law.

This decision was made as the Iranian publishers who had asked to attend the Frankfurt Book Exposition and had been refused issued a statement in protest yesterday at noon following their rejection by that exposition.

In this statement, the chief of the Tehran International Book Exposition was asked to deal as necessary with the Frankfurt Book Exposition and the German publishers. It had been agreed that eight Iranian publishers representing 30 Iranian publishers would take part in this exposition, which begins in Frankfurt on 16 Mehr [8 Oct].

According to Mr. Zanganeh, two years ago officials of the Frankfurt Book Exposition did not allow Iranian publishers to take part in this exposition because of the death sentence against Salman Rushdie. In turn, in its third year German publishers were not allowed to take part in the Tehran International Book Exposition.

It is worth noting that Whitehouse, the chief of the Frankfurt Book Exposition, went to Tehran this year during the month of Urdibehesht [21 Apr-21 May]. During that visit he met with the Tehran exposition's directors and leaders, and a statement of agreement was signed permitting participation by the publishers from both countries in the expositions in Germany and Iran.

Following the signing of this statement of agreement, German publishers were given permission to take part in the Tehran International Book Exposition and in the last few months eight Iranian publishers have asked for a booth at the Frankfurt Book Exposition representing about 30 reputable publishers. This exposition also registered the Iranian publishers, and two weeks ago the publishers sent to Frankfurt 2,000 books along with the lists and other necessary materials.

Following that, in the German press one or two letters protesting the attendance of the Iranian publishers at the Frankfurt Book Exposition were printed. Whitehouse

and the exposition spokesman answered all the protests and problems and expressed the view that we must not censor the publishers of the world, and especially the Iranians.

After this the Iranian publishers, in light of the atmosphere that had emerged in the German press and propaganda, sent a letter to the chief of the Frankfurt Book Exposition and announced that in view of the negative propaganda situation, which was also being exacerbated by some of the German media, it would be necessary to take the necessary security measures to protect the Iranian publishers' book booth.

In this letter, the Iranian publishers also asked for a round-table discussion attended by Muslim experts and intellectuals during the exposition to give their views.

An answer to this letter, the chief of the Frankfurt Book Exposition announced that he shared the concern of the Iranian publishers, and gave his assurances to them that throughout the exposition the necessary security would be provided. He gave no answer, however, to the second request.

The day after the answer, another letter was sent to the Iranian publishers, the text of which is printed below.

To guarantee the ability to conduct business at the Frankfurt 91 Book Exposition, the Board of Directors has decided to revoke the acceptance of the Iranian publishers at the exposition.

In assessing this measure, the deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance for cultural affairs said: Iran is the only nation that defends the rights of the deprived nation of Palestine, and of course the Zionists do not welcome this.

Mr. Zanganeh said: The pressures brought to bear by the Zionists on the German cultural institutions are due to the Islamic Republic of Iran's defense of the rights of the people of Palestine. What is regrettable, however, is the fact that the Frankfurt Book Exposition has done something illogical and anti-cultural.

He emphasized: For every free-thinking person, abuses and political influence in cultural affairs are regrettable. He called upon all intellectuals, experts, and people interested in the cultural reputation and credibility of international organizations to protest this German measure.

According to Mr. Zanganeh, this measure is actually a violation of the statement of agreement that the chief of the Frankfurt Book Exposition signed acknowledging all of Iran's conditions and issues, and it turns away from it. He announced that regrettably, and because of this illegal reaction, German publishers will be prevented from taking part in the Tehran International Book Exposition.

Addressing Iranian publishers, the chief of the Tehran International Book Exposition said: Publishers may

voice their complaints in the relevant legal and cultural circles, and make claims for damages and loss of reputation.

Compensation for Environmental Damages Filed With UN

92AS0125D Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 30 Sep 21
p 4

[Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran has filed claims with the United Nations for damage to the nation's living environment sustained during the Persian Gulf war.

Mr. 'Abedini, deputy director of the environmental protection organization, who had traveled to Semnan to introduce the new general manager for this province, announced this in an interview with the correspondent from the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC NEWS AGENCY.

He said: This claim is in addition to the damages to the nation's living environment caused by the imposed war. He discussed the determination of the damages caused to Iran's living environment resulting from the oil war in the Persian Gulf. He said: The extent of these damages cannot be estimated, and it cannot be easily determined.

He noted: Actually the damages to resources and to nature cannot be stipulated. He then discussed the fact that there is now a group of the nation's environmental experts meeting in Kuwait concerning the effects of war damage on the environment. He said: The region's environmental ministers will meet at the end of the month of Mehr [22 October] in Kuwait.

According to Mr. 'Abedini, arrangements with the United Nations have been made to study the damage to the environment. In addition to this, study of the effects of this pollution has been begun in the area by a peace group sent from Germany. Continuing, this official discussed research programs under way in the Environmental Protection Organization. He said: More than 40 research projects are being carried out within ten programs in this organization. He added: Almost 10 billion rials credit has been allocated to this organization for research in the Five-Year Plan. He then noted this organization's serious determination to deal with industries polluting the environment. He said: In view of the new circumstances, henceforth this organization will deal with the utmost seriousness with industries that pollute the environment (water, soil, and air). Among other programs, he also announced plans to obtain the manpower needed by the organization. He said: Recently, in order to make use of manpower doing obligatory military service, authorization has been issued by the Military Forces Central Command Staff to use 500 persons for basic and expert environmental affairs. Likewise, 500 released prisoners of war have been recruited by this organization.

PAKISTAN

Cabinet Expansion Said 'To Stave Off Crisis'

92AS0040J Lahore THE NATION in English 15 Sep 91
pp 1, 4

[Article by Ahmed Rashid: "Expansion in Federal Cabinet To Stave Off Crisis in IJI"]

[Text] Islamabad—Once again in three years a government is floundering. Once again a spate of corruption scandals involving the country's elite have swamped a bewildered people. Once again law and order, sectarianism and terrorism appear to be running out of control while a government looks on rather than deal with the problems in a really political manner.

In a lengthy interview with THE NATION, published on Saturday, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif spoke in cliches and sound bites that appeared to have little relevance to the government's present predicament. When a Prime Minister does not acknowledge, what politicians are saying everyday in the newspapers—that there is acute political strife within his own coalition that is all is not well with the economy or the direction of foreign policy or that there is severe financial instability in the country because of the cooperatives crisis, then the government does not seem to be tackling the problems, but only hiding behind them.

The herd of Ministers, who now surround Mr. Nawaz Sharif, will ensure that he becomes even more isolated from the reality and perhaps even more unresponsive to the series of crises that are overwhelming ordinary people—law and order, political infighting, inflation and the uncertainty on the borders. By buying support and dishing out favours, no government can claim to be a political government or claim to be dispensing with the mandate it has received at the polls. It is an incestuous, you-stroke-my-back-kind of arrangement, that is not worthy of a people who have fought long and hard for a democratic and above all accountable system of government.

On 12 September the herd were at the airport to wish Mr. Nawaz Sharif on Quaid-i-Azam's birthday. Many Ministers did not merely shake his hand in a respectful way, but bowed, bent their foreheads down to touch his hand while at least one hulking Minister even curtsied by bending his knee.

The degree of sycophancy that Mr. Nawaz Sharif is unfortunately surrounded with, is not entirely his fault but he should be wary of it and it should not further persuade him that patronage rather than politics can keep him in power. Nobody can deny the unfortunate and powerful pressures that he lives with daily. The country has witnessed, at very close range, the pressures that the former government faced.

The scandalous performance of Anwar Saifullah, the story of the moving chair at the swearing in of the

Cabinet and the totally unedifying role of the President in this pantomime, demonstrates better than anything at least one source of where the pressure is coming from.

Sources close to Mr. Nawaz Sharif admit that the Cabinet expansion was yet another panic decision to stave off the revolt within the IJI [Islamic Democratic Alliance]. Knee-jerk decisions seem to have become the hallmark of a government, which barely needs it with such an overwhelming clout in the Assemblies. The panic decision to cancel the trip to Japan, the overt haste to pass the Shariat Bill and the 12th Amendment, the uncertainty over the retirement of General Beg, the co-op scandal and now the need to induct one-third of the total Muslim League members in the Assembly to the Cabinet, do not do Mr. Nawaz Sharif any good.

Governance according to the panic theory of political science has been unknown in Pakistan until now. Brutal and repressive martial laws and incompetent civilian governments still managed to project an authority, the will and determination to rule. But in the past 10 months there is a visible slide towards decisions taken in haste and the continuation of dealing with issues, not with political maturity but to slide them under the back door of patronage along with a bag of goodies.

The mood in Islamabad is abysmal. Western diplomats have made it clear that the West's honeymoon is now over. Diplomats from numerous countries expressed serious doubts about whether the government has the ability or the temperament to govern an increasingly unruly nation.

"Important political decisions are being made without broader consultations, without thought or political judgement and in a great deal of hurry," said one diplomat, who just three months ago was over the moon with the government's privatisation programme. "He is not improving in the job as he should, he is not learning from past mistakes and perhaps the job is too big for him, as it proved to be too big for Benazir Bhutto," said another.

In interviews with bureaucrats and Federal Ministers, who ostensibly fully support the IJI, the crisis of confidence in the mode of decision-making is equally serious. Increasingly it is from within his own ranks that Mr. Nawaz Sharif has the most to fear and where some of the deepest cynicism lies.

Mr. Nawaz Sharif hopefully has a long way to go before the next elections. He has been a firm and decisive administrator all his political life, he has never been out of office and knows the corridors of power and the pressures they entail better than anyone else in the country. He is young and appears committed to the idea of Pakistan moving ahead, rather than being trapped in the stagnant waters of the past. He is in power and backed by a comfortable majority which should allow him some risk taking.

He faces a public which is tired of political infighting and wants a government that is clean, honest, firm and can follow through on realistic policies without compromising with the corrupt feudal political culture. In short, he still has a great deal going for him and in no way can be prematurely written off. But the time is now ripe for Mr. Nawaz Sharif to demonstrate a firmer grip on the depressing political realities rather than hiding behind a make belief world that is well as long as it is not acknowledged.

Expansion of Federal Cabinet Questioned

92AS0002D Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
19 Sep 91 p 6

[Article by Farhatullah Babar: "Nawaz Sharif's Jumbo Cabinet"]

[Text] The recent expansion of the federal cabinet to jumbo size—69 ministers, ministers of state, advisors and parliamentary secretaries out of a total of 156 IJI [Islamic Democratic Alliance] MNAs [Members of National Assembly]—certainly makes it the largest though not the most competent and efficient cabinet in the 44 years history of the country. Even after excluding the six Senators and non-parliamentarians in the new set-up the expanded cabinet means provision of lucrative jobs at the cabinet level to at least 40 percent of the IJI members of the National Assembly. Two out of every five MNAs belonging to the ruling alliance have thus been given jobs.

Induction of some more federal ministers was expected for quite some time as the Prime Minister was seen dangling cabinet positions before aspirants of all hues to keep them toeing the line. What was however not expected is the abnormal increase in the cabinet strength particularly under the prevailing circumstances which are certainly far from normal.

It is a measure of the prevailing abnormal circumstances that the government has banned all fresh recruitments for the last 10 months for reasons of austerity even at the risk of seething resentment among the educated youth. It is a measure of the abnormal circumstances that the Services Management Division has recommended a drastic cut in those ministries such as Education, Food & Agriculture, Cooperatives and Health which deal with subjects belonging largely to provincial domains and for which there was little justification to maintain huge bureaucratic set-ups in Islamabad. The government had also accepted the recommendation in principle. Implementing the recommendation however meant slashing ministerial jobs for the MNAs and the scheme was quietly shelved.

To add insult to injury the cabinet expansion was preceded by a raise in the emoluments and perks of the President, the Prime Minister and the Ministers. The ministerial perks were raised at a time when the low paid employees and clerks have been vainly agitating for better service prospects and pay rise. Secretariat staff

throughout the country have struck work from Monday demanding an improvement in their service conditions after their muted protests fell on deaf ears of the government.

Self reliance has been the pet slogan of the IJI government. People are constantly being exhorted to cut their coat according to the cloth. Lack of resources has often been cited as the major reason for the government not being able to provide the basic necessities of life. Addressing a function at the Military College Jhelum on Monday the Prime Minister stated that a major obstacle in the promotion of literacy was the lack of funds and urged that the "squandering of public funds on non-productive ventures should be stopped and the resources diverted to education". In a country whose literacy rate in 1991 is less than what it was in 1965 and where according to an Education Ministry's report about 40,000 "schools" are without buildings, who can quarrel with the Prime Minister's observations? But there is much more also.

The government is in serious financial straits facing an inflation which the IMF says is over 20 percent while the government admits of only 13 percent. It is selling profitable state enterprises to raise funds to meet budgetary deficit. The worsening economic situation has forced the government to bring in a mini budget by raising telephone charges by 25 percent from the 7th of this month. There are reports of an impending increase this month in railway fares and gas and electricity rates. Under such abnormal circumstances what was the pressing need for expanding the cabinet which is estimated to cost an additional 20 million rupees every month?

It would be offending the Prime Minister's intelligence and sensitivity to assume that Mr Nawaz Sharif is oblivious to these grim socio-economic realities. If in spite of fully comprehending them Mr Nawaz Sharif is forced to endure a jumbo cabinet there must be even grimmer realities of politics of survival. What are these?

Liability

First, instead of proving an asset the two third parliamentary strength of a motley crowd, the IJI, is in fact a liability for Mr Nawaz Sharif. One would have assumed that a genuine and solid majority in parliament protects the leader from pressures and blackmail. It has now turned out that the IJI's parliamentary party is less of a cohesive unit and more like a crowd of disparate individuals and small groups each pressurizing and blackmailing the Prime Minister for the sole objective of acquiring power and pelf.

It is a disturbing thought that the Prime Minister is shoved and pushed by his own alliance partners to such a limit. After all how else can one explain the fact that the cabinet swearing-in ceremony had to be delayed by over half an hour because Senator Anwar Saifullah Khan

refused to take oath as Minister of State and the Prime Minister had to yield to the demand to give him full ministerial rank?

The Cabinet expansion also betrays the magnitude and extent of political bribery, corruption and patronage to which the government of Mr Nawaz Sharif is capable of going, its tall claims to eliminate corruption and setting up of a Working Group for the purpose notwithstanding. How else can one describe the doling out to political cronies of non-existent portfolios which as Political Affairs and Provincial Coordination or the Division of Production Ministry, already shrunken by privatisation, between a Minister and a Minister of State?

Or how else can one describe the carefully thought out scheme of ministerial allocation which is patently aimed at appeasing the known pressure groups within the alliance rather than based on any consideration of quality, merit and improving efficiency? All the relevant pressure groups capable of destabilising the Prime Minister namely the all powerful President, the cool but stubborn Junejo who was feared to join Pagara, the rightist JUP of Sattar Niazi holding the Shariat card and Jam maintaining the delicate balance in Sindh crucial for Nawaz Sharif's survival, have been sought to be neutralised by accommodating their kith and kin and nominees in the cabinet.

Focus

The jumbo cabinet brings into focus the callousness and inhuman disregard of the haves to the plight of have nots in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Over two million youth, educated and otherwise, seek to enter the nation's job market every year but a vast majority of them are disappointed, spreading frustration and discontent. Contrasted with this some 200 odd feudals and business magnates in parliament continue to strengthen their grip on power, pelf and opportunities. Mr Nawaz Sharif's claim to make Pakistan an Islamic, egalitarian and welfare society cannot arouse any credibility unless the system is drastically restructured and opportunities redistributed. A brigade of 70 odd Ministers, Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries stands in rapt attention to mock his claims.

Commentary Condemns 'Growing National Passivity'

92AS0167B Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
8 Oct 91 p 6

[Article by Shireen M. Mazari]

[Text] [Box] In relation to foreign affairs, the government continues to seek means to appease the United States and, therefore, is willing to enter into endless dialogue even as its aid remains cut off. The fact that the interests of the United States are becoming increasingly divergent from Pakistan's national interest, seems to be irrelevant. For instance, there seems little to discuss with the Americans on the nuclear issue when the main aim of

the United States is to seek an end to Pakistan's nuclear-weapons capability, while Pakistan needs to examine the nuclear issue within its own defence and security parameters. [End box]

With daily reports of murder and sexual crimes, and the frequent exposures of political and financial scandals, the national polity is in a strange state of disarray and passivity. Civilian governments have fallen for far less in Pakistan, and the seeming tolerance for the present anarchic environment reflects a certain exhaustion and resignation that has overtaken the nation. It is as if the people's bitter struggle for democracy and what followed—corruption, horse-trading, nepotism—has finally made the nation give up.

Or, perhaps, it is the realisation that the ruling elites and the public seem to be moving along parallel tracks, with the former totally unconcerned about the perception of the masses and secure in the knowledge that as long as the centres of power do not get aroused, the ruling elite will survive. In such a situation, it seems fruitless for the public to even voice concern over the state of the national polity, and finally, through sheer helpless fatigue, the nation is, it seems, beginning to accept the system as it is.

While the government carries on unaffected by the exposed political and financial scandals, the leader of the main opposition party seems more interested in her foreign relations than in the domestic polity. While the slightest hint of an American foreign policy initiative evokes a positive reaction and comment from Ms. Bhutto, the gang-rape of a pregnant woman near Multan, or the Aasia Ayub incident or the increasing political crimes and attacks on journalists, have not seemed to merit any comment from her—although Mrs. Nusrat Bhutto did finally find time to visit Aasia Ayub!

Having shown her continuing popularity amongst the "Jalsa" public, Ms. Bhutto chose to abandon the groundswell of public opinion that had been aroused, and traipse off to the United States. While foreign lecture-tours and socialisation with the Americans may do wonders for one's ego, and may look good on an academic curriculum vitae, it should by now be apparent to all Pakistani politicians that the Americans cannot by themselves bring one to power here nor can they sustain or topple a government in power. In any case, would we want them to have that power?

At a time when the average citizen was hard hit by the cooperative scandal which deprived countless people of their life-time savings, the "dynamic" leader of the opposition adopted a "march-half" approach by galvanising public discontent and then leaving them cooling their heels while she travelled across the American landscape!

As for the government, it found itself continuing with business as usual, despite the fact that some key figures in the cooperative scandal were presumed to be part of the ruling elite. The sheer brazenness of those in power

continues to shock a tired and helpless nation. Continuing in the Pakistani political tradition, resignations were not even an explored option!

Meanwhile, the increasing militarisation of the Pakistani society continues unabated as violence and murder increasingly become acceptable tools of political discourse and social interaction. Even where those guilty of violence have been identified—as in the Aasia Ayub case—the establishment seems more interested in protecting the government functionaries. That the I.G. [Inspector General] Police, Punjab, could publicly insinuate that the majority of women raped were willing parties to the deed, and get away with it, is a sad reflection of the nation's morality. It is not surprising then to find increasing levels of violence extending to the elite, which after all cannot remain immune forever.

Within this demoralised and corrupt polity, it is hardly surprising to find a lack of direction and assertive policies whether in relation to domestic issues or foreign affairs. On the domestic front, development is being stymied with no clear sense of direction and with government recruitment being done on a selective basis—on the grounds of one's political connections. As for the whole drama of self-reliance, no concrete effort has been made to move the country towards this goal. The pressing law and order problem is being tackled by being ignored—apart from the required declaratory statements—as if it will go away by itself. The net result is that political leaders in the provinces are acting like local warlords who are keeping the centre at bay by containing the latter's political opponents.

In relation to foreign affairs, the government continues to seek means to appease the United States and, therefore, is willing to enter into endless dialogue even as its aid remains cut off. The fact that the interests of the United States are becoming increasingly divergent from Pakistan's national interest, seems to be irrelevant. For instance, there seems little to discuss with the Americans on the nuclear issue when the main aim of the United States is to seek an end to Pakistan's nuclear-weapons capability, while Pakistan needs to examine the nuclear issue within its own defence and security parameters.

Again, the ruling elite has shown no concern over the appointment of an identified CIA operator (see the earlier columns of this writer in *THE MUSLIM*)—Mr. Platt—as the new American ambassador to Pakistan. Ironically, the wooing of the United States is the only issue on which there is consensus between the government and the opposition—witness Ms. Bhutto's various pronouncements on the issue and the recent statement of Malik Qasim who is all ready to compromise Pakistan's nuclear programme in exchange for American aid.

Perhaps it is this compulsion that is preventing the government from focusing too much attention on the Kashmir issue, especially domestically, where there is a

strange lack of information relating to the intensifying military struggle in occupied Kashmir with the spillover along the Line of Control.

Again, the lack of resoluteness in the government is preventing the nation from taking advantage of new opportunities arising from the changes within the Soviet Union. In fact, bold initiatives in any issue area are either sorely lacking or are not being pursued after the initial momentum—as in the case of Pakistan's new strategic relationship with Iran and the tripartite talks on the Afghan issue.

In any case, in the final analysis, a nation's policies will only be as strong as the national polity, and in Pakistan's case there is a need to arouse the nation from its passivity. The nation owes it to those, who, over the years, have given unquestioningly of themselves—often with their lives—to continue the struggle to build a better nation. Forty-four years is too long a time to now submerge ourselves in passivity and resignation with the way things are.

Commentary Claims IJI Not United

92AS0159D Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
15 Oct 91 p 6

[Article by Zahid Ahmad Khan; italicized words as published]

[Text] [Box] All the major parties of the IJI [Islamic Democratic Alliance] are being hoisted by their own petard. The Prime Minister is doing everything and anything without their consent. His condoning of excesses committed by the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] against its political opponents in Sindh is being seen by the Jamat-e-Islami as a counterattack on its already waning popularity in urban Sindh. Roughly speaking the only functional group within IJI is the Muslim League of Muhammad Khan Junejo. [End box]

Is IJI an alliance of political parties with definite aims, or just a motley of political interests and pressure group; who sans IJI have been only a small political following among the masses? The common Pakistani electorate has started calling into question the very legitimacy of the IJI and its political clout in the country.

The internal squabbles in the IJI are perhaps reaching a point of no return. The much-touted summit of Islami Jamhoori Ittehad on the 30th of September in Lahore ended on a sad note, without taking any positive decision on major issues bedeviling the IJI. In order to keep up the charade of unity, everything was deferred till further notice. IJI's leadership is trying desperately to shuck the image of being merely a political alliance. After the sad performance by the IJI at its Lahore summit, PDA [People's Democratic Alliance] is definitely going to concentrate more on these serious lacunae within the IJI with renewed vigour.

There was no unanimity of opinion on major ranking issues. The dissolving of the IJI's Supreme Council is not a breathtaking decision, given the magnitude of the problems within the IJI. The non-acceptance of the resignation of Prof. Ghafoor Ahmed is just a repetition of the formal statements of the IJI top leaders to the same effect. However, on the expulsion of Hizbe Jihad from the IJI, the top leadership did show the desire to keep itself intact from internal fissures. But this decision did not go unopposed. Senator Qazi Hussein Ahmad and Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi considered the decision too strong. Their opposition to the expulsion of Hizbe Jihad may be set down to the fact that both these leaders of the IJI don't want the same treatment to be meted out to them in future, if their present not too cozy relations with the IJI get worse.

In fact, opposition to the expulsion of the Hizbe Jihad from the IJI, has opened the Pandora's box of recriminations by those IJI parties who no longer see eye to eye with it on its national and international policies. The only party which is going out of its way to support the IJI is MQM. But this is due to various constraints on the MQM itself. All other parties are feeling that they are being seen as irrelevant with the passage of time.

Agha Murtaza Pooya was accused of using PDA's platform to criticise IJI's leaders and its policies. According to Agha Murtaza Pooya the alliance has discarded its ideals and that it has been hijacked by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Hence the IJI has no right to rule the country. Other leaders of the IJI have off and on expressed similar views; but since they have so far avoided open confrontation with the IJI, and partly because their political stature in the national politics is not that enfeebled as that of the Hizbe Jihad; they are still being cajoled by the aldermen of IJI. The IJI picked the Hizbe Jihad for this condign punishment so as to serve as a strong reminder to the other dissidents to keep themselves within reasonable bounds.

Agha Murtaza Pooya directly accused President Ghulam Ishaq of ambidextrously controlling the province of Sindh through the Jam-Marwat duo. The implication was that the President himself was running the country over and above the heads of IJI. It was for the first time that one of the components of the IJI imputed motives to the President. Previously, the criticism of Ghulam Ishaq Khan from within the IJI has been muzzled by the top IJI leadership. He, in fact, has been painted by the IJI as an impeccable leader, everything about him was above-board.

Agha Murtaza Pooya feared that this alleged underhand *modus vivendi* to control Sindh may also be tried in other provinces by the President. Agha Murtaza Pooya has set a very portentous precedent for the friends and foes of the IJI. We may be witnessing further charges against the President of Pakistan by the sidelined parties of IJI. For PDA he is no longer the *amicus curiae* of the IJI but an active member of IJI protecting it with unconstitutional means.

All the major parties of the IJI are being hoisted by their own petard. The Prime Minister is doing everything and anything without their consent. His condoning of excesses committed by the MQM against its political opponents in Sindh is being seen by the Jamat-e-Islami as a counterattack on its already waning popularity in urban Sindh. Roughly speaking the only functional group within IJI is the Muslim League of Muhammad Khan Junejo. All other parties are becoming mere adjuncts to keep the charade of unity in the IJI, which is as elusive as it was when IJI was formed, with the sole aim of ousting the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] from power.

There is an acute identity crisis developing within the IJI. With the exception of Nawaz Sharif, there is hardly a towering national political leader in the hierarchy of the IJI. But his biggest predicament is that the euphoria of ousting the PPP from the Centre and the provinces in turning into disillusionment. However, one redeeming feature is that the pace of disintegration within the IJI's ranks is still not as rapid as was expected by its opponents.

The IJI is criss-crossed with excruciatingly painful ideological and political differences. The MQM is based on *Mohajir* ethnicity. Jamat-e-Islami claims to stand for the spiritual foundations of Pakistan. Both are fundamentalist in their approach to their ideals. The MQM has supplanted the Jamat-e-Islami in Karachi and Hyderabad, at least for the foreseeable future. How can the Jamat forget this. It also speaks volumes as to why the Jamat-e-Islami is so vociferous in its war efforts towards the *Jihad* efforts in Afghanistan and Kashmir in which it sometimes also bypasses the IJI government's foreign policy directives, thereby creating problems for the government. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam is also looking towards other political centres for its respectable salvation from the IJI. One wonders how it has stuck to the IJI for so long.

Every component of IJI wants it to follow its line of thought and action, without giving anything in return. Nawaz Sharif appears to have no other choice but to follow his own nose. If the IJI's parties accuse the top leadership of neglecting them they are right. As for their main grouse: that the MQM is being unduly pampered by the Prime Minister and his confidants, it may be said that the alliance between MQM and IJI is essentially an alliance between the Muslim League and the MQM. But what else can the beleaguered prime minister do?

Power politics in Pakistan is basically based on charismatic political characters. The moment they coalesce in some sort of union, the inevitable clash of personalities comes up in more than one way. Part of the current problems of the IJI is, that there are too many leaders claiming to be the bigwheels of Pakistani politics, despite the fact that some of them have even been defeated in the last general elections. A lot depends on the grit and the probity of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to keep this fragile alliance intact.

It's high time for the IJI to address itself seriously to its internal problems. Deferring everything for some unknown future has never been a good policy on the part of a party ruling a sensitive country like Pakistan. It puts paid to its political opponent's contention that is after all not a political party but merely a conglomerate of opportunist parties seeking loaves and fishes.

Editorial Views Islamic Lobby in West

92AS0158A Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
12 Oct 91 p 6

[Text] The idea of an Islamic lobby in the United States to counter the influential Zionist lobby, which should have taken shape a long time ago, is only now being initiated. Prominent American Muslim and former world heavyweight boxing champion, Mohammad Ali, has taken up this task and is discussing the idea with various Middle East countries, including Egypt and Syria. Speaking from Cairo, Ali said that President Mubarak has promised to help him set up a "powerful" Islamic lobby in the United States to counter the Zionist political juggernaut which prevails over U.S. administration on issues concerning the Islamic world.

The Muslim Ummah has always possessed the potential of a powerful lobby in international politics, but it has rarely put this potential to effective use, being consumed by divisions within the Islamic community. By sheer numbers, the Muslim ummah is a force to be reckoned with—one billion people, 43 sovereign nations and significantly substantial Muslim populations in non-Muslim states like India, the Soviet Union and the Far East. More significant, the Muslims are the producers of oil which the developed Western world just cannot do without. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is an institution that has political clout in international politics which cannot be ignored. However, with the exception of a short period in the 1970s, the Muslim world has failed to put either of these resources to any political advantage.

Muslims do not lack the wherewithal to set up an Islamic lobby in the United States nor to develop science and technology to upgrade their status internationally. What seems to be lacking so far is the vision and will to do so. Pakistan's only Nobel laureate physicist has been relentlessly appealing for rich Muslim countries support for Third World research in science and technology to little or no avail. Instead of supporting a modern university of science and technology rich Arab sheikhs prefer to patronise institutions in the United States. Rather than investing in the uplift of their own countries and poorer brethren—not only social and economic but more important, in terms of science and technology and research and development—the wealthy Arabs are investing heavily in the United States and Europe. In doing so, they are giving the West a potential leverage against them since the West has not hesitated to freeze Muslim assets whenever it has wanted to do some arm-twisting.

An Islamic lobby in the United States would be more difficult to create than the Zionist one since Muslim consensus and unanimity are often lacking on many issues. Nevertheless it could well become an important test case for the Muslim Ummah. Success or failure of this venture will be a reflection of the Ummah's capacity to transcend petty divisive interests which have so long bedevilled Islamic unity and well being.

The Deal on Debt Issue

The joint annual moot of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank this week at Bangkok should address itself to the debt problem of the developing countries with more than routine attention. Even the IMF's pre-conference economic review concedes that the Gulf conflict has aggravated the problem, particularly for the developing countries of this part of the world because of their special economic links with the Middle East. The report estimates that the Philippines and four South Asian countries sustained a combined loss of 550 million dollars in workers remittances and export earnings in 1990 and are likely to be deprived of at least another one billion dollars in 1991.

The debt problem of the Third World, particularly of the poorest among them, has been now on the world's agenda for more than a decade but no meaningful solution has emerged. It has been a major issue at all the forums of the North-South dialogue initiated at the historic UN General Assembly's special session in 1974. Since then, however, the problem has been growing in dimension. Latest reports suggest that the Bangkok meeting will debate what has come to be known as the Commonwealth Plan to slash official debt of the poorest nations by 18 billion dollars and reschedule the balance on more favourable terms than currently available. After the rejection by the Paris Club—the institution which groups the creditor countries—the chances of any breakthrough at Bangkok look slim though the plan is hardly generous. Nonetheless many will eagerly await the outcome of deliberations at the IMF-World Bank meeting. Strongly the major creditors have extended concessions to debtors like Poland and Egypt on political considerations but they continue to discriminate against countries equally deserving debt relief to overcome their financial difficulties.

Pakistan has a manageable debt problem compared to many other developing countries. But its outstanding debt of 18 billion dollars is not negligible in relation to its low national income. Besides the problem is growing for it also and the net concessional assistance after debt servicing payments of more than one billion dollars annually is modest and hardly meets its needs. Because of its problems with the United States on the nuclear issue plus the harsh conditionalities of the IMF facilities, Pakistan's debt management in years to come will become complicated. Its aid strategy, therefore, has to shift in future from negotiating more loans to seeking legitimate rescheduling of old credits or substantial debt relief in some other form. It must actively concert with

other developing countries to clinch a fair deal on the debt issue as soon as feasible.

Sermon Views Future of Muslim Ummah

92AS0183A Lahore NIDA in English 15 Oct 91 pp 1, 2

[Synopsis of sermon by Dr. Israr Ahmed]

[Text] 1. The Quran [Koran] tells, although somewhat indirectly, that a time will come before the "QIYAMAHA" i.e. the end of this world when the DEEN OF ALLAH i.e. Islam will dominate the whole world and become supreme over the whole of the globe.

2. But the present circumstances as well as the near and foreseeable future appear to be altogether different; rather absolutely opposite.

3. The big gap between the ultimate future and the present and foreseeable conditions of the Muslim Ummah appears to be difficult, rather impossible to explain. But in fact it can be easily explained in the light of the Quran and especially the prophecies of the prophet Mohammad (SAWS).

4. The present human race which numbers about six billion can be divided according to Quran into three Ummahs: a) The former Muslim Ummah or the Jews whose total number is not more than 14 to 15 million; b) The present Muslim Ummah i.e. the Muslims of the world whose total number is more than a billion which can be further sub-divided into the "UMMIYYEEN" i.e. the Arab Muslims who are not more than one fifth of the total number and the "AKHAREEN" i.e. the non-Arab Muslims who are five times the Arab Muslims in number, and c) The rest of the mankind which is essentially the Ummah of "DAWAH" of the prophet Mohammad (SAWS); They can also be divided into two parts namely the Christians whose number is one and three quarters of a billion and the rest of the humanity which is round about three billion.

5. The Quran tells us that the former Muslim Ummah i.e. the Jews, have already been condemned by Allah and the prophet (SAWS) has foretold their final extermination by divine punishment at the hands of the prophet Isa-Ibn-Maryam (P.B.U.H.) who will descend from the heavens to which he was raised alive. It seems from the fast movement of the events that one is witnessing today that the time of the second coming of Hazrat Isa (PBUH) and final annihilation of the Jews at his hands is not very far off and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and its future expansion into their cherished greater Israel which is not far from sight is in fact a divine scheme by which the Jews from all the world over will be gathered at one place so that their promised land may be turned into their collective graveyard. It means that the present "EUPHORIA" that the Jews of the world Zionists are experiencing today is like the final glow of an extinguishing candle.

6. The present Muslim Ummah also deserves divine punishment because of turning their faces away from Islam in their actual practices; both individual as well [as] collective. And surely the Arab Muslims deserve the punishment more than the other Muslims, because it was much easier for them to understand and follow the last message of Allah that is Quran. And exactly it is this divine punishment which has started with the Gulf War which is the beginning of a long series of wars by which the Arabs will lose their lands one by one to the Jews who will be led by DAJJAL before the coming back of Hazrat Isa (PBUH).

7. The rest of the Muslim Ummah will also pass through a period of turmoils and various forms of tests and tribulations. But it seems that the revival and renaissance of Islam will start from some non Arab Muslim nation or country; maybe Pakistan or Malaysia and so on!

8. It is also just possible that Allah may reject all the present day Muslims and induce a new nation from the Ummah of the "DAWAH" of Mohammad (SAWS) (maybe the Chinese, the Japanese or even the Indians etc.) into the folds of Islam and the final global domination of Islam may start through them. This has already happened once during the Muslim history when in the thirteenth century of the Christian era, Muslims were given a bitter beating at the hands of the TATARI hordes and then the very torch and banner of Islam were given in their hands so that the second rise of the Muslim Ummah after the down-fall of the Arabs came under leadership of the Turks, so much so that even the "KHILAFAH" was transferred to them.

9. It is just possible that the two phenomena described above i.e. the final annihilation of the Jews and the rise of the sun of Islam from eastern non-Arab Muslim or neo-Muslim country or nation may coincide with each other. In that case the process of the final and global domination of Islam will start immediately because as the prophet Mohammad (SAWS) has foretold, when the prophet Isa (PBUH) will come again, he will "break the cross and kill the pig" meaning thereby that the idea that Jesus Christ died on the cross will come to an end and the eating of pork will be prohibited with the result that all Christians will become Muslims.

10. These events will come to pass anyhow. But the real task before us i.e. all the present day Muslims is to first of all become real Muslim in our individual as well as social behaviour, and then to strive for establishing the DEEN of ALLAH as a complete politico-socio-economic system based on freedom, fraternity, equality and justice for the whole of mankind in some one country so as to show and demonstrate to the humanity at large as to what Islam really is and what it really stands for!

11. On our part and in our humble way myself and my "Rufaq" (colleagues) in the Tanzeem-e-Islami Pakistan are striving to establish the system of "Khilafah" that is

the just politico-socio-economic order of Islam in Pakistan. For that purpose I have founded two organizations in Pakistan; one is the Markazi Anjuman Khuddamul Quran Lahore which propagates the knowledge and wisdom of the Quran specially among the educated people of Pakistan and the other is Tanzeem-e-Islami! mentioned above.

May Allah give us the courage as well as strength and determination to accomplish the Himayalan task of establishing Islam and make it supreme over the whole of the world. (Aamin.)

Conspiracy Said Forming Against Nuclear Program

92WP0046Z Karachi JANG in Urdu 7 Sep 91 p 3

[Article by Irshad Ahmad Haqqani: "Hindu and Jewish Plots Against Pakistan's Nuclear Program"]

[Text] Rafat Yahya, the South Asia correspondent for a prominent Egyptian newspaper, has revealed in detail in his newspaper the plot hatched by Pakistan's two enemies, India and Israel, to destroy Pakistan's Kahuta plant. This plot was to have been carried out last July but was foiled because of the capture of certain Israeli commandos by Kashmiri freedom lovers in occupied Kashmir.

According to the information gained after the capture of the Israeli commandos, these individuals were entrusted with the task of obtaining information about the flight patterns of Pakistan military aircraft around Kahuta and surreptitiously planting very sophisticated instruments as close to Kahuta as possible, which would have disrupted completely Pakistan's radar and communications systems. The next step was to land more than 60 commandos by helicopters as close to Pakistan's nuclear installation as possible. The commandos were to carry out the following tasks:

1. Get rid of the Kahuta security guards by killing them.
2. Cripple the air defense system of the area.
3. Install extremely powerful bombs and explosives near the reactor.

According to the report of the Egyptian journal, when Israel succeeded in destroying Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, close relations were established between Israel and India in the efforts to destroy Pakistan's nuclear capacity. India, on its part, wanted Israel's cooperation in destroying Kahuta (God forbid). For various reasons, neither of them on its own had the ability to carry out the suggested plan.

Israel is so distant from Kahuta that without using Indian facilities it could not have operated effectively. As for India, first, it did not have the technical capacity to carry out the plan and secondly, it was afraid of Pakistan's retaliation. After long discussions, these two enemies of Pakistan decided to carry out a joint venture.

India also had in mind the fact that if the venture was a joint one with Israel, it would be difficult to prove conclusively India's part in the destruction of Kahuta.

India was also afraid that if it was proved to be solely responsible for injuring Pakistan's nuclear installations, there would be severe reactions in the Arab and Islamic world and it would become impossible for India to maintain good relations with the Muslim world.

The Egyptian journal refers to a book on Israel's secret organisation Mosad by one of its agents in which the author states openly that he had studied in depth the plan to destroy Pakistan's nuclear reactor. In 1984, certain Indian nuclear scientists were invited to Israel in order to prepare the complete plan for the attack on Kahuta. Mosad agent Ostravesky reveals that Israeli experts gave full training to Indian commandos for an attack on Kahute.

Egyptian journalist Rafat Yahya refers to another book that reveals that U.S. Jewish national Jonathan Pollard, who was arrested for spying for Israel, had passed on to Mosad secret U.S. information regarding Pakistan's nuclear program and that it was based on this information that Israel had prepared a plan for a possible attack on Kahute. According to the journal, in the same way that Israel's premier Begin had personally supervised a plan for the assassination of Muslim nuclear scientists as a part of which Egypt's nuclear scientist Dr. Almashad was killed in Paris, Shamir is also supervising the plot to kill Muslim scientists among whom is included Pakistan's prominent nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan. According to the Egyptian correspondent, injury to Pakistan's nuclear capacity would mean that what little nuclear capability the Muslim world possesses would be destroyed resulting in the emergence, on the one side of India and, on the other, of Israel as nuclear powers. Pakistan would thus disappear from the scene as a political power and this is precisely what radical Hindu elements are aiming for.

The Egyptian journal's report is not a startling revelation but it shows that Hindu and Israeli conspiracy against Pakistan's nuclear program is an established fact, which the world is slowly beginning to realise. We are sure that the Government of Pakistan and its related agencies are well aware of the facts and are not only fully cognizant of the dangers that the conspiracies of enemies pose for us now and in the future but also have taken all possible measures to counteract these plots.

Unfortunately, over the last few weeks efforts have been made to use Pakistan's nuclear program for political purposes. Benazir Bhutto, co-chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party, has stated that during her term of office, she was kept in the dark while steps were taken to advance the nuclear program to a stage, which was not necessary and without which Pakistan could still have defended itself effectively if needed. This statement has caused a front to be formed against her and government spokesmen are threatening to bring legal action against

her for treason and insurrection. But these individuals forget that Bhutto did not say anything that has not been said earlier by responsible people in the past governments.

During an interview with the TIMES in 1987, the late president Zia said openly, "You may write that Pakistan is in a position to build an nuclear bomb anytime it wishes." In an interview with the BBC on 22 December 1990, General Arif referred to the complete nuclear capacity of Pakistan and India and said that the real issue was to acknowledge the possession of nuclear weapons and then to proceed from that point on. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan acknowledged in 1984 that Pakistan possessed enriched uranium and the technology to use it.

The other day, Pakistan's former foreign minister addressed a scholars' conference arranged by Sindh University in Hyderabad and said exactly the same thing that Bhutto did. He has said that he would not comment on Bhutto's statement but added that in fact, Pakistan was capable of building a bomb. After such explicit statements and knowing full well that the United States, India, and the whole world knows about Pakistan's nuclear capability, to talk of charging Bhutto with treason is nothing more than political campaigning.

I remember well the comment of former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo on Zia's TIMES interview, "Here we are, protesting loudly against Kuldeep Nair's interview while our own President is saying what the Indian journalist has said. I see no difference in the two statements." Instead of indulging in rhetoric on the nuclear issue, Pakistan should at present pay attention to two problems:

1. Full protection of Pakistan's nuclear installations.
2. After China's expression of readiness to sign the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty], world public opinion should be persuaded to exert pressure on India to sign the treaty as well. If this comes about, the present tension over the nuclear weapons issue would be greatly lessened and then Pakistan could also sign the treaty. Prime Minister Sharif's suggestion for a conference by five countries should also be promoted more intensively on an ambassadorial level. There are no differences of opinion to be found over Pakistan's nuclear capability among various classes of Pakistanis. Efforts should be made to preserve and strengthen this unanimity of view and no one should use the issue as a subject of rhetoric in order to gain political advantage.

Scientist Claims Nuclear Weapons Program Intact
92WP0046Y Karachi AMN in Urdu 20 Sept 91 p 6

[Article: "Dr. Qadeer: I Have Fulfilled the Task of Advancing Atomic Technology; Many Important Weapons Have Been Made and the Needs of Other Countries Are Also Being Met"]

[Text] Islamabad 19 December (PPI): Renowned scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer expressed satisfaction over having fulfilled the task of advancing atomic technology entrusted to him by the nation. At the conclusion of the five-day conference on advanced missiles held at the local hotel, Dr. Qadeer spoke to journalists and said that Pakistan had made significant progress in defense, science, and technology and had built shoulder-fired missiles, tank destroying laser-range finders, and devices for clearing mines. He said that Qadeer laboratory was fulfilling the needs of not only Pakistan but also of other countries. He stressed the need for establishing institutions that would enable Pakistani scientists to study recent scientific advances and undertake research. He said that Pakistan had no shortage of capable individuals who could bridge any gap and fulfill any task; they only needed guidance and encouragement.

Financial Reform With Social Justice Recommended

92AS0140A Islamabad *THE MUSLIM in English*
24 Sep 91 p 6

[Article by Aslam Sheikh: "A Timely Warning"]

[Text] The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), an important forum for North-South dialogue on economic issues, has served a timely warning against what it calls "precipitate financial deregulation" in the developing countries under the slogan of liberal economic reforms. It has also called for a new look at the so-called liberal approach advocated by the West-dominated Bretton Woods twins—International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Those in Pakistan who seem to be in a special hurry to enforce all kinds of financial reforms in response to prescriptions emanating from these institutions should particularly harken to what the UNCTAD has to say about the banks and the financial institutions. "The fashionable financial recipe calling for the abandoning of financial repression are not promoting development," it points out and goes on to add that the Anglo-Saxon banking system which gives a central role to the capital market may not necessarily work efficiently in the developing countries because government intervention in the allocation of credit is indispensable.

Mess

We are currently in a terrible financial mess. It is the consequence of an approach and policy which permitted cooperatives to function virtually as banking companies over the past so many years including the period of dictator Ziaul Haq's long and repressive Martial Law. While political freedom was drastically curbed, there was a virtual free-for-all in the economy, permitting all kinds of loot and plunder. We are now reaping the bitter harvest.

But here is also an opportunity to re-think about the content and speed of implementation of whatever agenda of liberal reforms we have drawn up for ourselves under the inspiration of the ideologues of our Western creditors. Our zeal for reforms must be tempered with realism and proper awareness of adapting other models to our environment and needs.

Our socio-economic environment is characterised by an uneven regional economic development and wide disparities in income and distribution of rural and urban wealth. As the author of much of our economic planning (Dr. Haq) once said: "Poor societies often have poor means of distributing income and the institutions which create growth are not neutral as to its distribution." The process of growth in such a milieu necessarily further strengthens those who already have a disproportionate share of land holdings or industrial wealth. This also means that in the economies in which sophisticated tools of economic and financial management have yet to develop to a level where an automatic mechanism of supervision and correction begin to operate, the magic of the market does not necessarily work justly as well as efficiently. Against that background a rash process of massive de-regulation (and even privatisation) will hurt the disadvantaged and the poor and may indeed accentuate already existing disparities and distortions in the economy.

We are still in the midst of that historical transition during which a just and efficient credit distribution plays a crucial role in ensuring how broad-based the process of economic development is going to be and how its fruits are going to be distributed. Hence the importance of how our banks and financial institutions work.

The lessons of our brief economic history are very clear. In our present mad pursuit of liberal economic reforms, we must not forget how unbridled control of banks by a handful of families in the '50s and the '60s played havoc with the distribution of credit and created the politically explosive situation of the late '60s, culminating in the dismemberment of the country. Even the ideologues of Ayub Khan's Fourth Five-Year Plan recognised that and advocated proper social controls over banking operations.

The nationalisation of the banks in the '70s came after a great national debate in the late '60s about how the twenty-two families came to control the bulk of finance capital. As we begin to reverse that process with the swing of the economic pendulum from one extreme to the other, what happened in the not too distant past should not be lost sight of. We should not repeat the mistakes of the past and re-introduce the old economic model just because the reforms of the '70s failed for a variety of reasons, above all because professional economic management was ignored under the pressures and stresses of political expediency.

Transfer

As at the international level, we continue to stress a new framework for resource transfer from the rich to the poor world, from the North to the South, so in our national life too, we do have our acute social and regional mal-adjustments and the continued pressing compulsions for evolving mechanisms which can ensure, if not wholly, at least substantially a more just distribution of the pool of capital formed from the hard-earned savings of our depositors to finance future economic development.

The co-ops scandal is not entirely irrelevant to the question of how our future private banks should operate and whether or not we should necessarily privatise all existing nationalised banks. Let us wait and pause after the initial privatisation of two major banks and watch their performance. Let them also compete with the banks

which are in the State sector. We still need a mixed economy because we are still largely agricultural and only marginally industrial.

Long Way

We still have a long way to go for a real economic take-off. In the light of our bitter experience of the last few decades, we have to fashion a new model of our mixed economy, opening the expanding world of economic opportunities to all and not merely to a narrow circle of metropolitan and regional elites. We must have a proper blend of de-regulation and necessary social controls and supervision.

As the world of banking is thrown open to private owners after the ban of two decades, the State Bank must also strengthen and rigorously enforce the rules of the banking game to ensure, not only proper financial discipline, but also social justice if the history of the loot and plunder by the robber barons of the fifties and the sixties is not to be repeated.

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